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Wm J Henners
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The Rangeland Daisy

By Stephen Angus Douglas Cox

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CHAPTER I.

"THEY'RE robbing me, and I know it; but the question is, how am I to prove it and put a stop to it?"

Mr. Oliver Fairbanks, broker and promoter of Chicago, sat in his library smoking a perfecto and meditating, and suddenly he had given utterance aloud to the above words. Then, from behind him came the query:

"Who is robbing you, dad?"

Mr .Fairbanks did not look around. He recognized the voice of his son, and drawled out: "That you, Roger? Sit down and I'll unburden to you."

Eugene Roger Fairbanks was a handsome man of two and twenty years. He was dressed in exquisite style, and looked the society swell to perfection, but there was something strong and pleasing in his face, something which would tell the close observer that here was a young man who had the making of a real man in him. Tall, shapely and athletic, with square jaws, straight nose of goodly size, keen gray eyes and brown, curling hair, he was certainly good to look upon.

Roger Fairbanks took a seat at the opposite end of the library table, helped himself to a cigar from his father's favorite box, carefully trimmed the end off with a pearl-handled knife, lighted the weed, inserted it between his lips, blew a few rings toward the ceiling, and then turned his face toward his father and said, quietly:

"I'm ready, dad; fire away."

"Very well. You know, Roger, that I own a ranch out in Montana, I suppose?"

"Yes, dad."

"It's in Valley County, up in the northeast corner, near the line—the boundary line between the United States and the British Possessions, you know."

Roger nodded and emitted a mouthful of smoke.

"The Cross-Bar is a big ranch, Roger, yes, a big ranch, and I have it stocked with thousands of cattle. The superintendent, Josh Whalen, is an old-time friend of mine; he saved my life, once, when I was a young man, and I have always been grateful, and so, about twenty years ago, when he showed up here in Chicago, broke, I sent him out to Montana and made him superintendent of the ranch, and he's been there ever since. He got married a year later, and about five years ago his wife died. Since then Josh hasn't shipped as many cattle to Chicago, any year, as he had shipped annually before, by at least three thousand head. I have written to him a number of times, asking the why and wherefore, but his replies have not been satisfactory."

"What has he said, dad? What is his excuse?"

"He claims that the range isn't what it used to be, and that it is necessary to drive the cattle across the line every year, to find sufficient grass, and that the trip results in the loss of two or three thousand head, one way or another."

"H'm. Name some of the ways."

"Well, he says that there are outlaws and rustlers across the line, and that they seem to take a delight in bothering people from the 'States'—seem to consider them fair prey, in fact."

"H'm. Well, there might be something in that, dad."

"Yes, there might; but somehow I don't take much stock in the story."

"Then you think——"

"I'm compelled to think that Josh isn't giving me a square deal, Roger."

"Your idea is that he is holding out on you, eh?"

"Just that—to the tune of three thousand head of beef-steers each year."

"H'm. Well, it's possible, but there is also a chance that he is telling you the truth."

"I don't believe it. But—there seems to be no way to prove that he is robbing me. I'll have to stand for it, I guess; for if I send a man out there to investigate, Josh could pull the wool over his eyes, and he would hate me ever afterward, and would probably steal five thousand head of steers each year, instead of three thousand."

Roger nodded, but made no reply. Both sat there, smoking and pondering. Presently, however, the young man spoke:

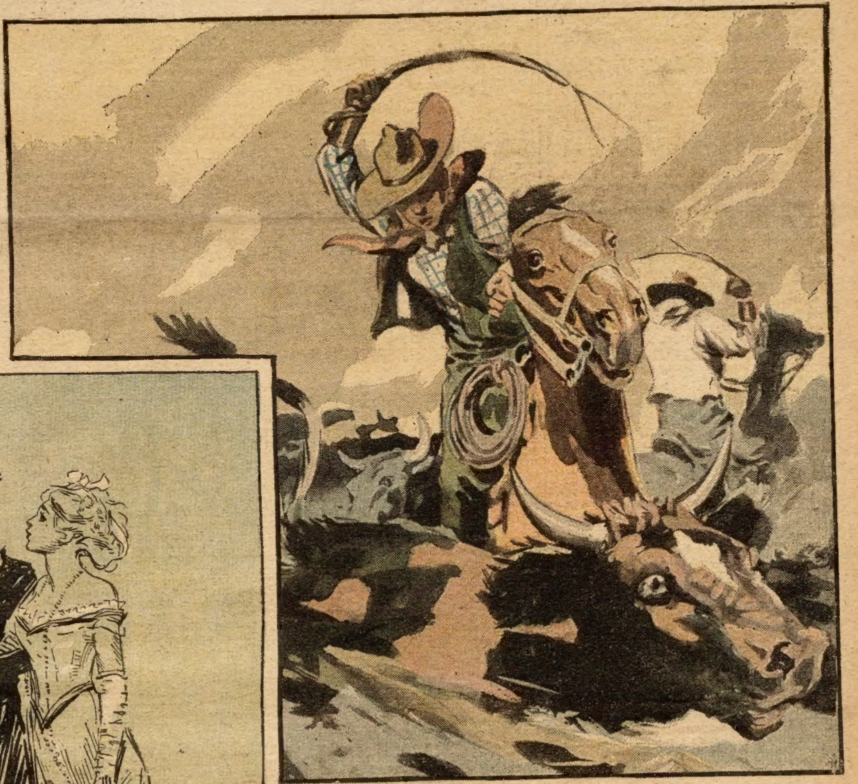
"Say, dad!"

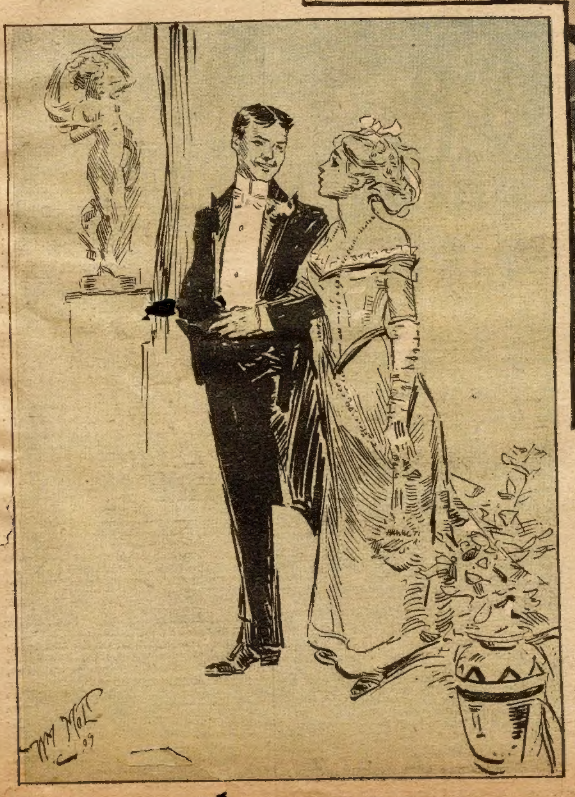
"Well?"

"I've got a scheme."

"Humph. What is it?"

"I'll elucidate. You know, dad, that I have about run the gamut of experiences here in the city. I'm tired of it all—yes, sick and tired. This society—pink tea—fashion-plate—by-the-book sort of an experience has got onto my nerves, and I'd like to give it the shake for a while, and I think I see my way clear to doing it."





Mr. Fairbanks looked at his son in a puzzled manner. "I don't believe that I quite follow you, Roger," he said.

"It's this ranch problem of yours, dad."

"Still I don't understand."

"You will when I explain. My idea is, that I shall go out there, dad, and learn the truth of the matter."

Mr. Fairbanks shook his head. "It wouldn't work, Roger. If the son of the owner of the ranch were to show up there, don't you suppose that everything would be run straight while you were there? Of course it would, and as soon as you came away they would drop back to the old way."

"Of course, dad—if I went there as Roger Fairbanks, son of Mr. Oliver Fairbanks, owner of the Cross-Bar Ranch."

The older man started and gave the other a keen, inquiring look. "You mean——" he began.

"That I go out there incognito, dad—yes. What do you think of the scheme?"

The other looked thoughtfully. "It might work, all right," he said; "but the difficulty would be in getting located on the ranch. Probably they wouldn't take a boarder—

wouldn't want to be bothered with one, and——"

Roger made a gesture. "Dad," he said; "I don't want to get located on the ranch as a boarder. I want to rough it—to get out and ride the range, help on round-up, take pot luck with the boys that do the work. In fact, I want to shuck these glad rags," with a gesture toward his clothes, and a grimace indicative of disgust, "and revel in cowboy-togs, dirt and absolute freedom from convention. In other words, I'll get a job on the ranch and become a cow-puncher, dad. Now, what do you think?"

"I don't think you'd like it Roger," was the reply. "It wouldn't be what you think it is, and, in truth, I doubt if you could stand it. You have been delicately reared, and——"

The young man broke in with a hearty laugh of derision. "Oh, say, dad, back up!" he cried. "Delicate nothing! Why, I'm the champion of champions in our athletic club. I'm a star at anything in the athletic line. I'm the boss boxer, star wrestler, and there are no stunts in the gym category that I can't do, with added frills. I've got the wind and staying qualities, and my fair share of sand, I hope; and as for this problem of doing the cowboy stunt—why, dad, it'll be a cinch for me. Don't you worry a minute."

The elder man eyed the other thoughtfully. "I believe that you could do it, Roger," he said, presently.

"Sure thing, dad. Of course I can; and if you say the word, it's me for the rangeland. It's up to you, and if you let me go, I'll promise to get all the information there is. I'll bring home the truth about Josh Whalen and the cattle. Say yes, dad."

Roger was eager and enthusiastic, and after pondering a few minutes, Mr. Fairbanks said: "All right, Roger. You may go; and I'll say that I hope you will find that Josh has been telling me the truth. The old rascal! I can't help liking him, and he saved my life, too! I should hate to get him in a hole, but—if he's robbing me, I want to know it."

"Of course you do, dad; and I'll find out all about it, and will bring you the news, and then you can take such action as you see fit. I wouldn't hesitate to investigate, if I were you, for if he is innocent, he won't be injured; and if he isn't, you ought to know it."

"True; well, it's settled, then. You can go as soon as you like."

"Good enough. I'll be off tomorrow. Have a ticket ready at ten, sharp."

"You'll need some money, too."

"Yes, seventy-five or a hundred plunks."

"Very good."

They talked a while longer, and then Roger went out to have a last evening's sport with the boys at the club.

He was in bed by half-past eleven (an unusually early hour for him), and was up at eight—unusually early, again. He breakfasted with his father, and then bade him good-by at nine-fifteen, pocketed the ticket and one hundred dollars in tens and twenties, got in the automobile and was driven to the station, where he landed in his section in the sleeper three minutes before the train was due to pull out.

And four minutes later he was being borne away toward the West—toward the Rangeland, where he expected to enjoy some new and varied experiences. Just how new and varied they were to be, he did not at that time suspect.

CHAPTER II.

A week passed, and then Mr. Fairbanks received the following characteristic letter from his son Roger:

"Dead Dad—I'm here. Got here O. K., and I'm O. K. yet—but it's much as the bargain. Say, these cowboys certainly are an impulsive and strenuous lot, and that's a fact; but it simply makes me love them the more. But, I didn't tell you, did I—that I've got a job on the Cross-Bar, I mean? Well, I have. You see, I rolled into the little village of Saco, got off the train and found some of the cowboys from the Cross-Bar celebrating in the one saloon of the burg. There had been four of them, but one had pulled his freight for pastures new, owing to some trouble he had with the foreman of the ranch, and that left a cayuse without a rider on the home-ride, which was the chance for me, and I improved it, you may be sure. I braced the wagon boss (that's what I heard him called later on—his gang called him a harder name) for a job, and after he had searched me over with as keen a pair of blue eyes as ever I bumped up against, for about two minutes, he asked: 'What's your name, son?'

"I told him my name was Eugene Rogers, and then he wanted to know if I had ever worked on a ranch. I told him no, but I hoped to, soon, and he grunted and said: 'Yuh kin come on out t' the ranch with us; we air needin' han's. Yuh kin ride Bill's brone.'

"That suited me from the ground up, and I told him I was ready to go whenever they were. Well, they weren't ready by a good deal, for they were bent on filling up pretty well, and I took a few myself, just to let them know that I wasn't exclusive, even though I did dress and look a bit different, and they seemed pleased by my thoughtfulness. So was I, for, honest, dad, that was the strongest strong-water that ever I poured down my neck! It got in its work in great shape, and I was soon embracing my newfound friends and telling them that they were the friends I long had sought and mourned because I found them not, or words to that effect, and they reciprocated liberally and declared that I was the best brand of tenderfoot that had ever stepped shoe-leather in Montana. I told them that it did me proud to be thus appreciated and then I came back with something to the effect that they were the plumed knights of the plains, the freeborn sons of the greatest and most glorious commonwealth in the world, and that I'd fight for them to the last ditch—yes, clear across it. It was a love-feast, and that's the truth, and when we got ready to start for the ranch, it would have puzzled a Philadelphia lawyer to determine which one was the drunkest.

"Jeff Bender—that was the name of the wagon boss—tied my suitcase behind the saddle of the cayuse I was to ride, and then assisted me into the saddle—and the cayuse immediately assisted me out of it. The boys had a dispute, afterward, as to whether I touched the saddle or not. I know that I touched the ground—touched, did I say? I mean struck it—hard. Say, that was a thump! It almost sobered me, and I resolutely refused to mount again until after I had had a few more drinks. This decision on my part proved to be a popular one, and the boys declared that I was a thoroughbred. So we all hiked back into the saloon and had three more rounds, after which we went out and tried it again. Honest, dad, I think the boys would have been glad if the blanked bronco had ditched me again, so as to give us an excuse to go back for more drinks, but this time he turned gentle and I stayed on.

"I'll never forget that ride to the ranch. It was an experience for me. I never was much for horseback-riding, you know—slithering along on a hard road in a forty-horsepower bubble stripped to the running gear has always been my long suit, and this traveling across the brown prairie on the back of a knock-kneed cayuse was a new one. The blanked bronc would travel along, gentle and nice, for perhaps five miles, and then he'd turn devilish and land me beside the trail. It wasn't so bad when I missed the rocks which cropped out here and there, for each 'dismount' was the signal for a round of drinks, every fellow having a flask in his pistol-pocket. Honest, dad, I believe that bronc was a trick animal and that the boys gave him signals if he showed an inclination to go more than the regulation five miles without turning cranky. I'll do them the justice to say that they usually picked spots free from rocks, however, and I had a reasonably soft place to 'light. But, anyway, I don't feel hard toward them, for the good-natured manner in which I took my medicine (perhaps I should have said medicines—the contents of the flasks making it plural number, you know) impressed the boys favorably toward me, and they declared that I was 'sure a corker!' Which was nearly right—my head felt light as a cork.

"We reached the ranch, at last, and if I had been sober, I would have been glad that it was so dark the people who lived up at the ranch-house (we had to pass right by it) could not see us plainly. But perhaps if I had been sober the bronc wouldn't have dumped me there—which same he did do. It was the last chance, I guess the boys thought, and we finished the last of the contents of the flasks, too, and tossed the empty bottles over into a corral near at hand, on the other side of the trail. Then we moved on and were soon at the bunk-house—that was what I heard them call it.

"Well, I don't have a very clear remembrance of that evening's experience. I dimly recall that I saw a number of men who were strangers to me, and that I ate with them, at a long table out in the kitchen, and that there was a good deal of good-natured raillery and laughter. I suspect that I furnished a large share of the amusement, for I was always good at making a fool of myself, you know. But the manner in which I had held my own with the three who had ridden with me from Saco helped me a whole lot, I think, for the gang treated me pretty decently, next morning, and told me what to do to reduce the swellings where my anatomy had come in contact with rocks in the various 'dismounts' that I had made while on the home-ride, and to chase the headache away—for I had one, a regular splitter.

"That afternoon my new friends got out a couple of pairs of boxing-gloves and invited me to don one pair. They hinted that they were solicitous regarding my health and that their belief was that what I needed, more than any other one thing, was exercise. Well, you know, dad, that when it comes to the mitts, I am right at home. Boxing has always been one of my favorite sports. It is breakfast to me, with honey on the side. But I didn't let on that I was eager. I looked doubtful, pulled a long face and said I would like to see some of the others perform a bit before I took chips in the game. Well, Jeff Bender and one of the others donned the mitts and went at it, and Jeff made a monkey of the fellow. I saw that Jeff was 'it,' and made up my mind what to do. When the other man was tired and quit, I put the mitts on and took my place in front of Jeff. Well, say, it was fun! When I started in, I had a headache, but when I finished, Jeff had it. Mine had vanished. I put it all over Jeff, and gave him the beating of his life. I knew that I was practically fighting the whole push, and that if I finished Jeff up in style, there would be no trouble in the future; so I made a thorough job of it. I put him on the turf four times, and the fourth time he stayed there—he was down and out.

"Well, that settled my status on the Cross-Bar. The boys hailed me chief, and declared that I was a man and brother and entitled henceforth to drink out of the same trough. I guess that I shall like it, dad, for as I said at the beginning, the impulsiveness and strenuousness of these cowboys suits me clear down to the ground. There is nothing artificial of fictitious about them; they are free and untrammelled sons-of-guns. And about Josh Whalen: I have seen him, dad, and I don't believe that he is a thief. No, sir. He hasn't been holding out on you, and I'll bet on it. He's a bluff old codger, but square—if he isn't, then I'm no judge of mankind. He couldn't steal; I'd as soon suspect myself, or you, dad.

"Well, I've written enough for this time. Write me, and I'll answer. And I'll write as often as I can, anyhow. You might as well make up your mind, though, that all is on the square out here. Josh Whalen is on the level.

"Good-by, from your dutiful son,

"ROGER."

"P. S.—Say, dad, Josh Whalen has a daughter, the sweetest, prettiest, most delightful, breezy and refreshing girl that ever the sun shone on. Her name is Daisy—and that's what she is, take it from me that this is so, dad! She's seventeen, maybe eighteen years old, and a peach.

"ROGER."

Oliver Fairbanks, broker and promoter, read the letter through with impassive countenance, till he came to the postscript, and then he gave utterance to a grunt, and read it over again—the postscript, I mean.

"Humph!" he grunted. "So Josh has a daughter, eh? If he ever wrote me about that, I've forgotten it. And she is 'sweet,' 'pretty,' 'delightful,' 'breezy' and 'refreshing.' Um. And her name is 'Daisy—and that is what she is,' eh? And she's 'seventeen, maybe eighteen years old, and a peach.' Um. Humph! Yes, of course Josh is innocent! He couldn't steal cattle—of course not."

He selected a cigar, the while a thoughtful look rested on his face, bit the end off the weed, lighted it, smoked a few moments, meditatively, and then muttered: "Maybe I made a mistake in letting Roger go out there. In fact, I'm afraid that I did."

But Roger would not have concurred in this view of the matter.

CHAPTER III.

Next day Mr. Oliver Fairbanks wrote to his son Roger as follows:

"My Dear Son—Your letter received, and was very glad to hear from you and that you reached your destination in safety. Am glad that you have got a place on the Cross-Bar Ranch, but I was very sorry to hear of your spree with the cowboys. I was in hopes that you would cut the drinking out. And, Roger, don't let that 'sweet, pretty, delightful, breezy and refreshing daughter of Josh's dazzle your eyes to such an extent that you will be unable to see a herd of three thousand steers being driven off for shipment, some fine day. Don't forget that you are out there in the interests of your father, and I shall expect you to keep your eyes and ears open. Let me hear from you as often as is convenient, and, Roger, don't be wild. Cut out the foolishness and get down to business. You are twenty-two years old, and should be above youthful follies. Well, I must go to the office, so will close. Good-by, from your loving father, OLIVER FAIRBANKS."

When Roger received the letter, he read it through, and then grinned to himself, so to speak. "Dad is afraid that I will get stuck on Daisy and forget to look after his end of the business," he murmured. "He's sure a great old codger, is dad. Well, I'll write him in a few days, and try to relieve his fears. It's not likely that I'm going to turn foolish and fall in love; but—say, she is a peach, and that's the truth! I've seen lots of girls, but I must admit that in my judgment Daisy has them all lashed to the mast. She's twenty four karat fine, and then some, as Jeff would say."

About ten days later Mr. Fairbanks received a second letter from his son Roger. It ran as follows:

"Dear Dad—I'm still alive, and if I live a few weeks longer, I think that I shall have this cow-punching graft learned by heart and can safely burn the books. Dad, it's immense! Say, this life on the rangeland is the life for me. No more Chicago for little Willie. No, sir-ree; nit, no, not. Say, dad, you ought to come out here and learn to ride a bucking broncho. It's the finest exercise in the world. You use every muscle in the body. It has all the systems of physical culture skinned a league. Of course, you would acquire a lot of bumps, bruises and perhaps a broken bone or two while you were learning, but what of that? Nothing in this world, worth having, comes without bumps, knocks, jolts and the loss of more or less cuticle.

"After I trimmed Jeff Bender, as I wrote you the other time, the boys cottoned me in great shape, and all were eager to impart knowledge regarding the accomplishments that are considered necessary for a sure enough cow-puncher to acquire. They were eager to wise me up, and I have been sitting at their feet, absorbing wisdom for the past week—sitting did I say? Part of the time I was lying. This was when I was trying to ride a bucking broncho, you know. I would climb into the saddle (with the help of two or three of the boys), and then the fun would begin. The bronc seemed to understand the matter perfectly, and he always entered into the sport with energy and spirit and with such implusiveness that in about ten seconds, more or less, I would go sailing up in the air, and after performing a beautiful parabola and turning one or more somersaults, would alight on the hard, hard ground with a thud that sounded like Amalgamated Copper does when it strikes bottom after having been pounded a few by Friend-zied Finance Lawson.

"And I've learned to use the rope, too, dad. Say, that's something that takes patience and dead lots of practice to acquire. It's all done by a simple twist of the wrist—but the difficulty is to acquire the ability to deliver the twist. After having practiced on the hitching-posts, the stovepipe that sticks through the roof of the kitchen, a few of the milch-cows, my fellow cow-punchers, and everything else that happened around while I was busy, I got so I could make good. Anyhow, I was able to throw the loop where I wanted it to go at least once in twenty times. I made a star cast, one day. I was trying for the stovepipe, and had just swung in great shape, when my foot slipped, I whirled half around, and the loop settled down, over the head of Jeff Bender, who was just starting to ride away. He was jerked off his horse and alighted in the middle of the trail on the flat of his back with a thump that must have jarred him some. Say, it's hard telling which of the two of us was the most surprised—though it's an easy guess who was the maddest. I felt sorry for Jeff, but, honest, dad, I couldn't help laughing. I'd have had to laugh if I had known that I would die for it the next minute. And the boys who saw it laughed, too, and I don't blame them. I don't see how they could have helped doing so. And Jeff? Well, he reached for his gun, and stood there with his hand on the butt of the weapon, glaring at me for the space of about fifteen seconds (though it seemed an hour to me). He sure looked wicked, and I shall always believe that I was about as near to death's door at that moment as I shall ever be and not have it open up for me. Then he gave utterance to a grunt, muttered something about 'dam-fool tenderfeet,' and climbed into the saddle and rode away. You bet your sweet life, dad, that I was careful not to let my foot slip again, when I was practicing with the rope and Jeff was anywhere around. I wouldn't like to take the risk of looping him a second time.

"Say, I had a rather pleasing experience the other day. There's a guy over to the northeast of us that owns a sheep-ranch. Well, one of his herders let a lot of the sheep graze across the line onto the Cross-Bar territory. Daisy was out riding and discovered the fellow, and when she ordered him to drive the sheep back, he sassed her and told her to run along home, little girl, or words to that effect. Well, she did—that is, she rode home on the run, and as I happened to be the first guy that loomed up on the horizon of her mental vision, she annexed me, as the boys would say, and the first I knew we were going toward that sassy sheep-herder and his bunch of little lambies at the rate of a mile a minute, more or less, and Daisy was pouring into my ears the story of the insults that had been handed out to her by the reprobate and calling upon me to avenge them—which same I was only too willing to do, dad, for the thought of any male human talking sassy to that sweet, pretty girl sure made my blood boil.

"Well, when we arrived on the scene—and we weren't very long in arriving, either, take it from me—I didn't do anything but jump off my bronc, walk up to that great, big, stand-in-the-corner-and-howl-for-mush and hand him one that landed him in a buffalo wallow ten feet away; and when he got up, I gave him another, and still another—amid great applause from the gal-lery (Daisy, savvy?) and much bleating from the frightened sheep. One of these (he had horns built for business) seemed to resent the unusual actions on the part of the herder, and the second time I sent the fellow to grass, and just as he was struggling to his feet, the Mr. Sheep in question rammed the sassy one good and hard and sent him headfirst into a bunch of sage-brush. My bronc took a shot at him then, as the fellow had landed close to the cayuse's heels, and kicked him about a rod in the direction of Lower California. The herder lit on his feet and kept right on running; he touched the ground only in the high places and never seemed to think how discourteous he was in taking such an abrupt departure without a word of farewell. He disappeared over a ridge three-quarters of a mile distant in about three wags of the tail of one of his pet sheep—and that's the last we saw of him.

"Well, we drove the sheep back across the line and went home, feeling pretty well satisfied with ourselves—at any rate, I did, and Daisy seemed to harbor the belief that I had done the thing up brown. I played modest boy, however, and pretended that I hadn't done a thing, which made Daisy come with more, as I knew it would. And say, dad, it sure sounded sweet and musical to hear her pouring praises into my un(?)willing ears! I think that I made a hit with Daisy, that day. I hope so, anyway. I hope another bunch of sheep will stray across the line, soon, and that their guardian will talk sassy to Daisy, so I can go with her again and thump him from Alpha to Omega and clear on over to Glasgow, the county seat. By the time I'd got him there, he'd be tired enough to sit down on the county seat, you hear me warble, dad!

"Well, I guess I have written enough for this time. I'm going to Beaverton in a few days, with the gang, to help drive back some one and two-year-olds that Josh has coming up here from off the Texas range. And, speaking of Josh—he is square as a die, dad. Straight as a string. He couldn't steal cattle; it isn't in him to do a thing like that. I like him more and more, the more I see of him.

"So long, dad. Write to me as often as you can; I'm always glad to hear from you. And don't worry about my getting wild out here. This is the place where they tame people. Honest, I've only been drunk three times since I've been here. That kind of beats Chicago, eh? There, I was one of the star performers in the continuous—a vaude-villain for fair. Good-by, from your dutiful son,

ROGER."

Oliver Fairbanks read this letter through and then emitted a grunt. "Humph!" he growled. "So Josh is 'straight as a string,' eh? 'Couldn't steal cattle,' eh? And you 'like him more and more, the more you see of him,' eh? Um. Humph. I guess you were thinking of Daisy when you wrote that, Roger, son. Um—h'm—humph." And he tossed the letter aside and plunged al-

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most viciously into the financial columns of one of the leading Porkopolis dailies.

CHAPTER IV.

In due time Roger received an answer to his letter, and Mr. Fairbanks told him to attend to business and keep his eyes open for trick work on the part of Josh Whalen. "Never mind the girl," he wrote; "she won't steal any cattle. Josh is your meat. Watch him."

Well, Roger merely smiled. "'Never mind the girl,' eh?" he murmured. "Say, I wish he'd tell me how I'm going to obey that order! And 'she won't steal any cattle,' hey? Of course she won't; but—I'm beginning to be afraid (no, not 'afraid'—glad) that she will steal Roger-boy's heart. Um—hum, as dad would say; if she does, it can't be helped; and I only hope that I shall be able to pilfer her heart at the same time, and so break even with her."

Then he sat down and wrote the following letter to his father:

"Dear Dad—We just got back from Beaverton, where we went after the cattle that were shipped up from Texas, as I mentioned in my last letter. Say, there were a lot of them—five thousand, about half and half yearlings and two-year-olds. I helped unload them from the cars, and to brand them afterward—and they put your brand on them, all right, dad. I know, because I accidentally backed up against the business end of one of the irons that had been laid across a box, and burnt an 'X——' through the leg of my trousers and came near getting it set deep into the flesh of my leg as well, but luckily escaped with only a slight burn, that is well now. The most fun was getting the cattle out of the cars. They seemed to be impressed with the idea that it was a case of having to leave their happy homes, and hung back like a tramp at sight of a woodpile. Even after they were out of the car and in the chute, they still hung back and seemed loth to descend to terra firma; but we cow-punchers stood on the next to the top board of the chute, on both sides, and with long poles in our hands, kept punching the beasts for fair and forced them to stay headed in the right direction.

"I was up there, large as life, and was doing my share and imagining that I was a sure enough cow-puncher, when all at once I punched at a bald-faced two-year-old, missed him and tumbled headfirst over on top of a vicious-looking brindle steer with horns big and long enough for the all-firedest dilemma that ever confronted mortal man; well, I grabbed hold of the horns and held on like grim death, while the cowboys laughed and yelled, and the frightened steers bellowed and started down the chute like they were suddenly sent for and had to go. They sure got a move on—and I went with them. That is, I traveled along with the brindle steer. It seemed to be the only thing I could do. Possibly a veteran cowboy might have extricated himself from such and unpleasant predicament, but honest, dad, my think-works were clogged—stuck tight, and wouldn't move a peg; and so, as I have said, I just shut my eyes, hung onto the horns and trusted to luck.

"I dimly heard the boys' commands to 'Hold tight!' 'Stick to it, 'Gene!' 'Don't fall off!' and a few other such remarks, but they made no real impression on my mind, for it was not working just then, and I held onto the steer's horns instinctively, just as, I suppose, a drowning man will hang to the fellow who is trying to save him.

"I heard the trampling of the steers' hoofs on the bottom of the chute, their frightened bellowings, the yells of the boys, felt the rush of the wind against my face, and then—the steer must have stumbled and fell, I guess; anyhow, I went flying forward over his head and struck something good and hard—and didn't know anything more for about fifteen minutes, so the boys told me afterward. They said my head must have struck against a fence-post. They averred, also, that never in all their experience as cow-punchers had they seen a chute cleared as quickly as had been the case that time. 'Maybe you're right,' I told them, 'but all the same I don't care to repeat the operation!'

"'Yuh won't have to,' they told me; 'yuh just sit over here at one side and look pleasant, and we'll git th' rest uh th' critters out uh th' cars.' And I did it. I didn't want to take any more headers down into the chute, on top of brindle steers with horns a yard long. That experience of mine gave me a name, though, dad, all right, all right. The boys don't call me anything but 'Texas,' now.

"Well, when they were ready to go to work, branding, I got into the game again. I didn't want to stay out. Somehow, the range-lust is upon me, has got me in its clutch; the fever is in my blood, and I don't believe that I shall ever again be contented to live in Chicago or any crowded city, where you don't have room to breathe, nor air enough for your needs, either, unless you rob your neighbor of his fair share. No, sir-ree. I'm sure spoiled for dwelling in the huge beehives of men; a tent and a blanket on the wide, wide prairie, with prairie-dogs, rattlesnakes, screech-owls and wicked cowboys for company is what Willie wants. Yes, even so, dad. But to get back to cases: I tended fire, for heating the branding-irons, till my eyes got to running water (because of the smoke, you know) to such an extent that it almost put out the fire, and then Jeff Bender put me at work 'holding' the bunch of steers that had been branded. This was easy, and I rode slowly 'round and 'round the bunch, and smoked cigaroots and was happy. Yes, dad, I used to think I was happy, that I was having good times, and all that, when I was circulating about little old Chicago with the gang, painting everything from the toes of my feet to the skyline a vivid, flaring crimson; but it was a mistake. There's nothing in it, and I was never happy in my life till I struck the rangeland, and if I know myself, here is where I shall locate. Here is where your son Roger is due to become a permanent fixture, so to speak.

"Well, the branding was finished, finally, and then we drove the steers to the Cross-Bar Ranch and turned 'em loose on the range. And about the next move that we are due to make, a month or so hence, so the boys say, is to drive the cattle up across the line into British territory. There's where you are due to lose some cattle—if what the boys tell me is true; and I don't doubt it a bit, dad. They say the rustlers are bad, up there, and that we will lose a good many steers, but that it can't be helped, seemingly—though we are going to make an extra effort, this year, to prevent the rustlers from getting in their work. You see, I say 'we' all the time. Well, I feel that way about it. I am one of them, now, dad.

"I haven't sensed anything suspicious since I struck this ranch, dad. Josh Whalen walks the straight and narrow path all the time, and you have never lost a dollar through him, nor ever will—accept this gossip from me, dad. And about Daisy? Well, there haven't any sheepherders sassed her lately. I guess that fellow that I bumped, that day, spread the news that a thumper from Thumperville had joined the Cross-Bar outfit, and they have been careful to keep their lambies off our territory.

"Well, enough for this time. Hope to hear from you soon, dad. Good-by from your dutiful son ROGER."

CHAPTER V.

Mr. Fairbanks wrote to Roger that he would expect him (Roger) to see to it that the rustlers did not get away with a lot of the cattle. "You ought to be able to manage it in some way," he said. "And after you have saved the cattle from the rustlers, be sure that you don't let Josh Whalen drive them off and ship them for his own individual account."

When Roger read this, he frowned. "I wish dad would get that idea out of his head—about Mr. Whalen, I mean. Josh is as square a man as ever lived. Well, it is up to me to prove to dad that his ranch superintendent is all right, and I'll sure do it, too—for Daisy's sake. Say, she gets prettier, sweeter, more delightful every day! I'm in love with her; there's no use trying to hide that fact from myself, and I'm going to spring it on dad, too, after we get back from across the line. Say, I wonder what he will do? Throw a fit, most likely, for he has long had a wife picked out for me—Miss Irene Gilderslove. She's a nice girl, but—alongside of Daisy, she looks like, well, like she was outclassed, and so she is. Of course, she's got plenty of money, or will have (and that's what dad is thinking about), but that doesn't cut any ice with me. I'd rather be a cow-puncher all my life, at forty per, with Daisy for my wife, than to be tied to Irene Gilderslove and have wealth galore. But, once I am married, dad will be all right. He has money in plenty, and I'll get it some day, so there's nothing to worry about on that score. It's Daisy for mine, anyhow, whether dad approves of it or not. I'd marry her, even though dad were to disinherit me—that is, if she'll have me. I'm not sure of that, for she treats me coldly sometimes, and I can't quite make her out. I'm not good at reading the minds of maidens, and that's a fact. I need wising up a whole lot, when it comes to that, but—well, I know enough to ask her, anyhow, and she will have to say yes or no, and that'll settle it."

Roger answered his father's letter and received one in return and answered it, before it came time to start the cattle on the drive across the line. The Cross-Bar outfit was away with the herd, up in the British Possessions, nearly two months, and then was back on the ranch once more. There were two letters for Roger, from his father, and he read them both, and at the first opportunity he answered them, as follows:

"Dear Dad—We have been up in the king's dominions and are safely back again. And we brought back nearly as many head of cattle as we took up there, too. I think that we lost just twenty-six steers. The rustlers tried to get away with a lot of the cattle, but we were on the watch and succeeded in euchering them. We had quite a battle, and downed two of the rustlers for keeps. Jeff Bender got a bullet in the shoulder, and yours truly received one in the fleshy part of his left arm; but there were no casualties on our side, and the rustlers made up their minds, I guess, that we were bad medicine and didn't bother us any more.

"The cattle are in fine shape, fat and sassy, and Josh says we will ship in about two weeks. And don't you worry, dad—the cattle will all be shipped to Chicago and consigned to your account. Josh is all right. And, say, dad, I have a little surprise for you. It's this: I've asked Daisy to marry me and she has consented. Say, dad, I'm the happiest man on two legs. Honest, I seem to be swimming around in a sea of bliss. Dad, Daisy's the sweetest girl in all this great, big, round world! But, there—just wait till you see her! You'll love her, too, dad; I know you will. Write me your blessing, and congratulate me, dad, for I'm sure entitled to congratulations for winning such a splendid girl for a wife. Good-by for this time, dad. I'm in somewhat of a hurry, for we're going riding, Daisy and I, and she's calling to me now. Good-by, dad, and I hope you'll be pleased with the news, from your dutiful son,

"ROGER."

When Mr. Oliver Fairbanks received this letter, he nearly had a fit. He gulped and glared. Then he adjusted his glasses and reread the part about the engagement of his son to Daisy.

"'Dutiful son!'" he exclaimed, pounding the top of the library table with his fist. "The ungrateful young cub! He knew that I wanted him to marry Irene Gilderslove, and yet he has the unmitigated nerve to sign himself 'Your dutiful son, Roger!' Bah—faugh! The young scoundrel! He shall not marry that wild girl of the prairie! I'll wire him to come home. He's got to come. Why was I ever fool enough to let him go out there in the first place? But, he isn't married yet, and I'll get him home before he does make a fool of himself, and it will be strange if I can't manage in some way to keep him from ever seeing 'Daisy' again."

Then he sent a telegram addressed to Eugene Rogers, Saco, Mont., reading as follows:

"Come home at once.
"OLIVER FAIRBANKS."

And in due time he received the reply:

"Can't come now, dad. Will have to wait till after cattle are shipped and Daisy and I are married. ROGER."

This telegram almost made Mr. Fairbanks fall over in a stroke of apoplexy. He at once wired:

"Come home at once. I command it.
"OLIVER FAIRBANKS."

The reply came duly to hand:

"Can't come. Not under your command, now, dad. "ROGER."

Back he wired:

"Come home immediately, or I'll disinherit you. OLIVER FAIRBANKS."

He received a prompt reply, as follows:

"Can't come; won't come. Disinherit if you want to. Am camped here at Saco, to save horseflesh in running back and forth between ranch and town. Come on with the telegrams till we get this thing settled. ROGER."

Then the following telegrams were sent and received in rapid succession:

"Roger, you're a fool.
"OLIVER FAIRKANKS."

"Dad, I'm your son, ROGER."

"Come home! OLIVER FAIRBANKS."

"Nit. ROGER."

"Give up the idea of marrying that girl.
"OLIVER FAIRBANKS."

"No! ROGER."

"If you don't, I'll disinherit you!
"OLIVER FAIRBANKS."

"All right. ROGER."

"Roger, do have some sense!
"OLIVER FAIRBANKS."

"That's a pretty big contract, dad; remember, I'm your son, ROGER."

"If you don't give up that girl and come home immediately, I'll disinherit you, disown you and will never permit you to darken my doors again.
"OLIVER FAIRBANKS."

"Can't help it, dad. It's Daisy for mine.
"ROGER."

This telegram almost put Oliver Fairbanks to bed. He raged and foamed, and pranced up and down the library and chewed his cigar to a pulp, and it was not until the middle of the afternoon that he sent a reply, a happy thought having struck him. The telegram ran as follows:

"Come home at once, Roger. Am very ill. May not recover. Heart trouble. Hasten, or you may be too late.
"OLIVER FAIRBANKS."

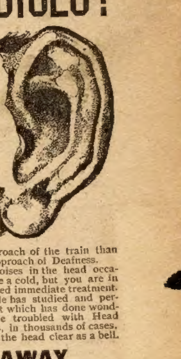
When Roger received this telegram, he knitted his brows and looked thoughtful. He, too, walked the floor and chewed a cigar to pulp. And presently a grim smile broke out over his face.

"I believe dad is stringing me," he muttered. "He thinks he can fool little Willie, but he can't do it. I'm on. Has heart trouble, has he? Well, so have I—and I think my case is the more serious of the two. But, I'll go home—yes, and at once, by the very next train east, which will be tomorrow at eleven-fifteen. I'll go home—and I'll take Daisy with me. We'll be married this evening and make the trip home serve for a wedding journey. Say, won't dad be paralyzed when we walk in on him and I present Mrs. Eugene Roger Fairbanks, eh? I should guess yes! Ha, ha, ha! Say, this lay-out sure pleases me from the ground up. And now to answer his wire, and then to hike for the ranch. There's a preacher here, and I'll take him with me." He sent the message, "Will start on first train east," and then hunted up the preacher, and half an hour later they were riding toward the ranch as fast as their horses could travel.

There was considerable excitement on the Cross-Bar when Roger sprung his scheme on them. Josh and Daisy both demurred a bit, but Roger overruled their objections. He had told them who he was when he asked Daisy to marry him, and he now explained that he wanted to beat his father at his own game. "He thought to deceive me with his story of sudden illness," Roger said; "and so I think it only fair to fool him a bit in return. And besides, I believe that will be the best way to go at him. When we walk in on him and he realizes that we are already man and wife, he will see the uselessness of being stubbofn and will come down, I'm certain. Let us be married at once, and take the eleven-fifteen east tomorrow."

Well, Roger's arguments prevailed, and they were married at ten-thirty o'clock. All the cowboys were present, and the handshakes they gave Roger were hearty ones, as were their congratulations and good wishes. They loved Roger for his many sterling qualities, and when he assured

(Continued on page fifteen.)



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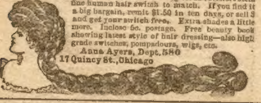

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In Strange Seas;

-Or-

The Flying Dutchman's Daughter

By William H. Manning

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CHAPTER IV.

ADRIFT IN THE BOAT.

BEFORE we left the ship I had asked Captain Roper if we were not to keep together, and his reply had been affirmative, but we were in turbulent seas, and before any of my party realized it the larger boat had driven out of sight and we had everything to ourselves.

My three companions were Bijah Straw, Jerry Whitebone and Solon Carr, so that Bijah and I were the only members of the original crew of the Cousin Polly. Bijah was both a cunning carpenter and able seaman. Jerry had improved a good deal since the former days aboard the Saucy Jane, and Carr was rather more than his equal, so I felt that I had a capable crew in the little boat.

Whitebone speedily made himself heard.

"Didn't I understand the captain to say, sir, that we were to run for the Cape?"

"Yes," I returned.

"He was right in stating that if we made the run we would stand a better chance of falling in with vessels. When they double the Horn they don't have the sea room they get farther north."

"We are going that way, and must while the sea drives so hard," I added, "but I don't like the notion of getting into the baffling winds and cold of the Cape region. What do you say, Bijah?"

"I'm no sea lawyer, sir, and I won't drop a wet swab onto hope, but if we really run that far we may as well say our verses and eat our last kidful, sir. A cockle-shell like this won't live in seas where big vessels have their fill to keep afloat. The gales of the Horn would turn us over quicker than you could whop a turtle by his flappers."

"But," urged Jerry eagerly, "there may be some temperate current like the Gulf Stream."

"Huh!" growled Bijah. "Nigh the Antarctic?"

"Who knows that the Antarctic is so bad as it's painted?" persisted Whitebone. "Who can prove that it's all cold and ice?"

"Them who have tried to reach the South Pole can say a word on that head, I reckon!" snapped Straw.

"They didn't cover all the waters, shipmate. There may be calm, temperate water and—who knows—inhabited land."

"Huh!" repeated Bijah, his voice ringing with contempt.

It was bad policy to permit contention in the boat, but I had been impressed by Jerry's manner and looks. For the first time since I met him, four years before, he was animated, eager and excited, all in one. His voice sounded almost exultant, and his eyes were gleaming oddly, while his face worked as if a feast was ahead. It was a queer mood for a man wrecked hard aboard the fierce gales of the Horn, and I briefly wondered if Whitebone had taken leave of his senses.

Arousing to a sense of duty I cut off further discussion on this point fully as possible, and then gave heed to our conditions. We were pulling stoutly at our oars, our one object being to keep from overturning. After the water fell away we could think of other things, but, for the present, the game was simply to save our lives by outriding the seas. Speed we did not try for, since nobody but Jerry was ambitious to run into the true Cape weather.

Long before we had left the Cousin Polly out of sight. It was the first shipwreck in my brief life afloat, and I was secretly down-hearted, for I felt it a melancholy thing to abandon the clipper ship as we had done. Sorrow wrenched at my heart as I thought of her, solitary and without life, wallowing in the troughs and resting upon the watery uplifts, but I tried to forget, for were we not in even worse straits than the Cousin Polly? She was not to be forgotten, however, for all hands held the belief that she had been seaworthy when abandoned, and even Bijah growled frequently.

"No use whatever, sir, to shake the old hooker. I was gettin' them seams tight fast enough to suit any reasonable man, and once it was done we had only to pump ship with a will and it would be the old Polly with her nightcap on as usual."

Beset by such misgivings as these we held our way, but it was not long before we had a change. Either the wind had hauled dead ahead or a new drive succeeded the former one, for the breeze astern dwindled to a cupful and then died out entirely, only to be succeeded by a head wind that came pulsing along before us, kicking up a choppy sea as it met the old drift, and giving us no end of trouble.

Being a youngster I had failed to look to our needs closely when we took to the boats, and it was now found that Captain Roper had been very forgetful of us. Food and drink we had, but no compass, nor any instrument for taking the sun. Our ill-defined purpose of fetching to the Falkland Islands was frustrated by this wretched mischance, and, though we had the notion that this land lay on our starboard bow, we could not make for it with the adverse sea, so we found ourselves in harsh straits.

We had early broached a breaker of water, and long before midday we opened our tins and eat of beef, bread and rice with what spirit we could muster, but it was a long and miserable day, and made all the worse by the feeling that we had been needlessly sacrificed. All the afternoon we had the wind from the new quarter, and all the while we drove to the east, despite our attempt to keep in what we conceived to be the path of the merchantmen we hoped to sight.

Night fell and found us still circumstanced in this way, and, though we were nearly worn out by our long fight with the elements, we hesitated to sleep. Lack of speedy effort in a crisis might at any moment overturn us.

Two hours later we had a glad surprise. Bijah raised the cry of "Sail, ho!" and as we all looked eagerly we saw a large, dark shape on our larboard bow.

"We are all right!" shouted Solon, his voice full of exultation. "Yell, you bullies, yell!"

We shouted in chorus, and then we fell to at our oars with mad haste, but, though we were hard upon the dark shape, which surely resolved itself into a ship, we had no answer. It was easy to fetch to her, and as we pulled we made out more.

"A derelict!" muttered Bijah.

"Water-logged!" added Solon. "She sets deep, and her rigging is partly gone. Do you see any main-mast?"

"Thunder's eye!" suddenly exclaimed Bijah, "that's our own good hooker! We have fell in with the Polly again!"

Astonishing as it was to all, we were soon of one mind. We had the sailor's knack of recalling details of cripplement, and the tangle of yards and rigging left by the fallen mast had a look of their own.

"We will board her!" I decided quickly. "She is in no immediate danger of foundering, and if we are right as to her condition, we are a deal better off in her than in this cockle-shell. Board her, my hearties!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" was the ringing response, and we pulled a stiff oar as we urged the boat forward.

The water was not rough enough then to trouble, and we made for the weather overhang and prepared to carry out our purpose. Bijah caught at the chains and so clambered aboard, and his cheery hallo drifted down to us.

"She is no dippin' hulk," he declared. "Here is the place for us, messmates. I'll cast a line, we will make fast, and then we'll see what shape she is in."

In a few minutes all hands had the deck under foot, and we quickly had the lanterns burning.

"We have men enough to rig a jury-mast," said Solon.

"Wait a bit!" advised Bijah. "We want to see how much water she carries, and whether she is still leakin' badly. I'll wager my plumduff I can make her tight as a kiderkin!"

I looked about me carefully, making out that the Polly was not riding so deep as Solon had said, and that she was drifting steadily to the south. Indeed, we seemed to have struck a new course, though the wind was almost imperceptible, and I was surprised that she made any way. I was interrupted by the readiness of Bijah to look to the leaks, so I sent Jerry with him, while Solon and I fell to at getting things in better shape on deck. When the carpenter came back he looked anything but dispirited.

"Sir," he exclaimed, "the Polly can be saved!"

"Sure?" I asked. "Can the leak be stopped without careening her?"

"Plum' sure, sir! She has taken in a surprisingly small quantity of brine since we deserted her, and that shows I had my job about done when we were ordered away. Now, sir, if you three will fall to at the pumps I'll go on with my calkin', an' we will have our peachblow with feet dry to the bilge in a few hours."

"Bravo, my 'hearty!" I cried exultantly. "Get to the seams. Calk her from garboard to water line, and while you ram and pay we will give you the music of the pumps. Ahoy, Jerry and Solon, fall to!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" rang the three voices, and our task began.

We were all stout fellows, and we grappled with the pumps with vim that set the water spouting, happy with the knowledge that every breakerful we hoisted was so much from the Polly's stomach.

That was the story of the night, briefly told. Morning found us weary, aching, suffering from loss of sleep and pitiably weak, but Bijah had well nigh accomplished his work, and when we dropped the rod we made a bare eighteen inches in the well.

Right there we flung ourselves down to sleep. The sun had practically dried the deck, so we hung to the most prominent position in the ship and risked nothing by napping in the fok'sle or cabin.

It was noon when we awakened. Solon betook himself to the galley, the fire was renewed, cooking done, and in a short time we were eating and washing things down with steaming tea. After that each man smoked a pipe slowly, and then we set to at work again. The work was cut out for us, our pressing needs being to finish what was already begun, and to rig the jury-mast.

Right there I saw how important a good ship's carpenter was. Bijah seemed like a magician, and his skill at getting work done was amazing. A new mast we could not make where there was no wood, but we had plenty of long, unusually large spars, and our duplicate of the main topmast was a lusty stick that came in good use. I had never stepped a mast in my life, nor rigged a jury, but I did my work as manfully as possible, and all other hands labored like horses.

The fall of another night found us with our make-shift in place, and when we had bent fresh sails and she took the strain we saw how cunningly Bijah had wrought. She stood stiffly when the canvas filled, and with the yards of the fore and mizzen-masts bedecked we took the night with our cloth drawing and the Cousin Polly minding her helm to a nicety.

We had saved the ship, she was still seaworthy, and as she purled through the wa-

I WAS A
Heavy Drinker
Consumed quart of whiskey every 24 hours.

CURED IN 3 DAYS

If you know anyone who drinks alcohol in any form, regularly or periodically, let me send my FREE book, "Confessions of an Alcohol Slave."

I drank beer at first, then gradually developed into a drinker of strong liquors. When drinking heavily I wouldn't hesitate to pawn my coat or break a saloon window to get spirits. For long periods I would drink over a quart of whiskey, rum or gin daily. And some mixed drinks and beer additionally!

I damaged business, health and social opportunities, made family miserable, lost real friends and became an unworthy, unwelcome burden upon all except the saloonkeepers, who cheerfully took my money for the poison they gave me.

For 16 years I kept it up, and I was regarded as a hopeless case. Various "cures" did me no good. But now I have a joyful message for drinkers and

Mothers, Wives, Sisters

While drifting from bad to worse, as all slaves of King Alcohol do, I unexpectedly found a true cure. It was (and is) genuine. It saved my life. My health was quickly restored. I became and am a respectable man, enjoying every benefit of freedom from the accursed alcohol. I speedily and naturally lost all desire for drink. I took less and less. I began to prefer tea, coffee and other non-alcoholic liquids; the craving for liquor ceased, I could sleep perfectly, my stomach became well and I recovered from other ailments which I now know were due to my indulgence in strong drink.

WONDERFUL

My cure lasted 3 days; if I had relied upon will power or faith I would still be a drunkard, because an alcohol slave has no will power while drinking. I rejoiced so greatly at having found a true cure that I decided to devote my life to removing the curse from others. My success has been marvelous. During eight years I have personally attended to over 6000 men and women who were addicted to drink; the list includes very many persons notable in all walks of life, including those of brains and those of physical energy. If I were permitted to mention names of those who have been saved through this *quick, permanent cure* the public would be astonished. They include senators, congressmen, public officials, great lawyers, bankers, clergymen, noted merchants, skilled mechanics, trusted managers and clerks, farmers and others in all vocations.

I tell about the secret in my book, which I send FREE to every person (or relative or friend) who takes alcohol in any form to excess. My one purpose in life is to cure the drunkard. I rejoice in every cure, each victim has my sympathy. What I promise is absolutely guaranteed. My remedy is for either steady or periodical drinkers. Think of it—a complete and permanent home cure between Friday night and Monday night—or any other 72 hours!

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ter the foam flecked musically along her hull and the wind sounded an answering song from the rigging.

For some hours my chief worry had been that I was not able to take an observation. Not one of the captain's instruments had I been able to find, though the compass was in its place in the binnacle. Thus, we could steer where we wished, but learn just where we were we could not. As four men could not possibly take the ship around the Cape, we laid our course due north and set her going, hoping to make some Brazilian port.

We planned to divide our small party into two watches for the night, and I ordered that Bijah and Jerry should keep the deck until midnight, when Solon and I would relieve them until morning. This varied the usual order of watches somewhat, but it suited all hands. Some hours before, in our poking about the ship we had found a small, fancy bottle which proved to contain brandy, and as there was just about enough for four stomachs, I had directed that it be set aside for a common nightcap. Now we emptied it, and found it to our taste, though stronger than we expected. After it was turned off Solon moved toward the fok'sle ladder, while I went to the cabin and was soon in my berth.

I fell asleep tranquilly, looking forward lazily to the expected call at midnight, quickly fell asleep, and then—finally awoke and found the morning sun shining into the room.

One thought I took of the situation, and then bounded out of my berth to my feet, struggled with a strange drowsiness, rushed my clothes on and piled upon deck. I went up in an irritable mood, thinking my shipmates had unduly favored me and allowed me to sleep through as a special matter, but when I was clear of the companionway I had a surprise.

The Cousin Polly was yawing before a stiff quartering breeze, and not a man stood on deck.

While I paused in consternation I heard a deep groan, and, turning, I saw both Bijah and Jerry. They lay prostrate near the wheel, off duty while the ship was cleaving her way through the water without a human hand to direct her course.

What new trouble was afoot?

CHAPTER V.

AN AMAZING MEETING.

I sprang forward to my messmates, and as I did so Bijah yawned deeply and rolled over on his other side, but his eyes did not open. I called to him in vain, and then Whitebone groaned. Vaguely thinking I was in a bewitched ship I obeyed my first impulse, swung a bucket over the rail, brought it up dripping and flung the water upon the two hands without compunction.

Up leaped Bijah, eager and angry.

"What the howlin' tempests——"

He began in fiery fashion, but stopped, reeled to the mizzen-mast, dug his fingers into his blinking eyes and was like a sleep-laden child.

"Ahoy, carpenter!" I cried. "What's the to-do?"

He straightened up, his eyes opened and he looked at me dully.

"Ay, ay, sir!" he replied. "Bear a hand, my bullies! Cast off the gaskets and fill away!"

I laid hold upon him and shook heartily.

"Wake up, Bijah!" I commanded. "I say, what's wrong?"

Again he took a stiffening position, again he punched at his heavy eyes, and then the man was almost himself. He gazed at me, at the morning sun, at the bellying sails, and at the wheel, and his surprise was profound.

"She's lashed!" he muttered, and then I saw for the first time that small stuff had been knotted to the wheel. "How—why, I had that thing the last I knew, and now she's tied up like a man seized to the mast for a floggin'!"

A sound diverted my attention, and I saw Whitebone come to a sitting position, apparently as sleepy as the rest of us. He stared at me stupidly and blankly.

"Where's Solon?" I demanded.

"Don't know," the carpenter answered.

I hurried to the fok'sle and found our other man sleeping like the dead, albeit, he breathed like a man in health. Leaving him alone I returned to my other hands. Bijah had taken the wheel, but both he and Jerry were looking wonderingly at the compass. Jerry pointed, and I advanced to the binnacle, used my own eyes and saw what held their attention.

"Who laid her course south?" muttered Bijah.

"Do you notice how mild the air is?" asked Jerry eagerly.

"Tearin' tempests!" exclaimed the carpenter. "Have we struck the tropics?"

We surely were many leagues from that region, but we had a temperature fit for 30° north, instead of the inclement, icy air met with both before and after the desertion of the Polly.

"Bewitched!" growled Bijah.

"And we heading for the South Pole!" I added.

"Where are we? If we were nigh the Falklands before, we must be right in the midst of Cape Horn weather, but we ain't! Now, why not?"

"Very mild and fine!" added Whitebone gently.

"We must have Solon up," I proceeded. "Here is something that needs all hands in consultation. Fetch him here, Bijah. I'll take the wheel."

In five minutes Solon came into view, tumbled first, rose and stood rubbing his eyes. Then four sleepy men took up the conundrum of the situation, and finally Bijah caught the solution.

"That brandy floored the whole of us!" he exclaimed.

"Why, the drinks were all small," I expostulated.

"Well, what else did it? Do so many hands fall asleep as one, and lie like dead men all night? Oh! it's a clear case."

"The brandy must have been intended for medicine," suggested Jerry.

"It came mighty near fitting the call!" retorted the carpenter.

We tried other guesses, but none satisfied us, and we had to accept the one solution. One and all, we had been drugged and slept through the night. Unlike Solon and myself, the two members of the watch had a confused story to tell. Bijah remembered being strangely sleepy at the wheel, and—that was all. Jerry said he had started to carpenter and tell of his condition Both said they could not remember putting lashings on the wheel.

"Lucky we had light winds," said Solon. "If she had blowed hard we would have lost what masts we've got left. Do you mind, sir, that we are getting a drive from the north now?"

"And it's increasin'," added Bijah. "Note, too, that the sun has dodged in of a sudden. It ain't my lucky bone to prognosticate weather in bewitched latitudes, but it seems to me we are facin' a small squall."

Solon had swung down a bucket to get water in which to dip his sleepy head. As it came up he took the dip, and then showed fresh wonder. Dripping, he looked at me.

"Why, it's warm!" he exclaimed. "Warm water at the Antarctic! Almost like the Gulf Stream. Yes, and, snap my gaskets, but we are in a current that is running just like the Gulf Stream."

This remarkable announcement took all three of us to the weather waist, and in five minutes we were all ready to admit the truth of the statement. Surely, a current was setting south, and we were riding in it, while water and air were mild, and yet we ought to be in harsh, icy weather.

"Bewitched, sure enough!" muttered Solon.

I had before then given the wheel to Whitebone, and I hurried below to see how we were logged. It was a positive fact that we were not fetching to Cape Horn, and I wanted to know how Captain Roper had us marked down when the Cousin Polly was abandoned.

The log was all right on its surface, and the last entry showed us in latitude 49° S., and longitude 39° W., but this was open to suspicion for several reasons, one of which was the even figures, and another the fact that later events had not brought us where we had reason to expect. I fell to thinking. Our captain had been a man who drank steadily, but I formerly supposed, in moderation. It now looked as if, having the ability to carry his positions with a steady heel, he really had been so muddled that his reckoning was as far wrong as his course in abandoning the Polly. I did not believe we were correctly logged.

Presently I carried the chart on deck and all hands pored over it. The question was, where were we? It was the general opinion that we were in the Antarctic Polar drift current, and we eyed the charted islands of Aurora, Georgia and Travers closely, but nobody expressed acquaintance with the region, and we gained no light, and more than ever we deplored the miserable luck that deprived us of a quadrant and sextant.

We aroused from our study as the noise in the rigging and the pitching of the ship showed us that the wind was fast growing. It was time to be astir. A black cloud was riding up the sky, and the skim of the breeze whitened the sea with rearing, pursuing caps. Even as we surveyed that quarter a ribbon of lightning played along the inky bank aloft, and we hastened to take in sail—it would never do to hazard too much with the jury-mast.

I cannot better illustrate how powerful the hold of the drugged brandy was upon us, and the confusion of our heads, than to say that we now took no thought to the fact that we were still holding a course south, whereas our first step should have been to bring her about and run north. It was too late to do this with the squall making for us with a black face, so we simply spilled a part of our wind and hitched the gaskets tight, after which we were prepared to run before it.

The squall was no laggard, and we had barely snugged down fully when she struck in earnest. The day seemed almost to go out like a lamp, and, hemmed in with fog, mist and clouds, we drove arrow-like on our way.

Whitebone had long been at the wheel, and as I finally went to the binnacle he turned a face upon me that was surprisingly cheerful—almost happy, it seemed.

"We are doing fine, sir," he said, smiling.

"The squall seems to be the active agent," I returned.

"We can run before it all right, sir."

"But where will we be when it is over?"

"It does not seem to matter much, sir, since we have a free seaboard."

"But we may make a landfall any moment, and, perhaps, drive full upon it."

"I hardly think so, sir."

"What do you know about this region?" I retorted irritably.

"True, true, sir, nothing, as I may say, safely. Yes, fetch somewhere."
but I have a feeling that we shall fetch up

He had turned and was looking at me oddly.

"Are you wondering if my hair is still black and my eyes blue?"

Short-sighted mortal that I was, I believed I had made a very telling shot in my ill-tempered sarcasm, but Whitebone answered composedly:

"Ay, ay, sir!"

He said it without a smile, and I was about to ask him if he had grown crazy when Bijah came to ask if we ought not to put lashings on some of our deck gear, and I forgot Jerry's eccentricity and went to bear a hand.

Four hours we scud before the squall, and then the clouds lifted, the sun made a weak try to reach us, and we had a decent view of the seaboard, but the water was piling after us in ugly seas and we dared not go about until they fell away. After all, what did it matter? We were in mild weather and could see neither land nor reef. When the right time came we could bring her upon a fresh tack and try for the middle Atlantic, and every hour the ocean must grow more quiet.

Late in the day, as I busied myself about deck with trifles, I was aroused by a shout from Whitebone.

"Land, ho!"

"Whereaway?" I cried quickly.

"On the larboard bow, sir."

I saw it now, a long, high blur on the seaboard, and its bold front was so suggestive of cliffs with outlying reefs that I grew anxious at once. While I hesitated Bijah added his word:

"Land on the starboard bow, sir!"

I wheeled, took a swift look and had the situation in full.

"A long landfall, and we are driving upon it full tilt. Bijah, shall we try to go about, or will she bear the anchors?"

"The seas have fallen off a good deal, and I should say bring her up. In the lack of instruments, the land may aid us to get our reckoning, if we can go ashore later." must describe the islands hereabouts. All hands, away to the anchor!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" shouted Whitebone, and I saw his face aglow with something like joy. "Solomon, take the wheel—if Mr. Stanford don't object."

I scarcely heeded him, but sprang to the necessary work, and my mates tugged so well that we had all clear in short order. We let the anchor go, paid out, and then braced the yards to the wind and waited. The land seemed to rise rapidly, and it became a question of whether the ground tackling would hold, or we maintain our way and go upon seen or unseen rocks. Presently we eased up so gently that we suffered no great shock, and then we gradually took place and lay riding with less pitching than was to be expected.

We were none too soon, for, on what had originally been our larboard bow, the land, a high, bleak point, was less than four cable-lengths distant, and the starboard point presented much the same view, but between the two capes was a bay, and the water seemed smooth within the bight of it.

Darkness was settling, and this was all we could make out before view failed us wholly, but we were content.

"Prime luck we didn't go ashore there," said Bijah, with a sign of relief.

"All would have been well had we driven into the bay," replied Whitebone confidently.

"Huh! Maybe there are just as many rocks there, too."

"Maybe not."

"Maybe nothing! If we had driven in there at night we should have split the ship from stem to stern. You would have seen the garboard strake carve like cheese."

"Maybe not!" persisted Jerry.

The other hands scoffed at him, but I gave his way scant attention. Satisfied now that we had our anchor fast, I saw that all was made snug, got the lanterns alight, and then sent Solon to the galley to cook of our best. After supper I went to the cabin and tackled the captain's charts and books, anxious to learn what land we had fetched to, but nothing came of it, especially as I knew nothing of the topography of our late landfall.

Later yet I arranged the watches, planning to give each man two hours on duty, and myself coming on in the first gray of morning. That night I slept well, and it was no drug-deadened sleep either. At three o'clock Bijah summoned me, and while he tumbled into the fok'sle I took my turn on watch.

Interested in the shore-line revealed by the graying hour I stood in the waist and scanned the land around the two capes, but while I was thus occupied a sound behind me caused me to turn. Then I had the greatest surprise of my life. I was no longer the only person on deck. Somebody else was there, and—wonder of wonders! that somebody was a young woman, neat, trim, good-looking.

And we were somewhere in the outskirts of the South Polar region.

While I stared blankly, stupidly, and almost in terror, she smiled and advanced toward me. Then her voice purled out musically:

"Sir," she said, "I am the Flying Dutchman's daughter!"

"Wh-wh-what?" I gasped."

Her smile deepened, and her manner was partly amused and wholly composed as she repeated:

"I am the Flying Dutchman's daughter!"

Still I gazed dumfounded. In the course of nature the Flying Dutchman must have died fifty years before, yet here was a young and charming damsel who claimed to be his daughter.

CHAPTER VI.

FIGHT FOR THE SHIP.

My failure to meet her friendly advances halfway clearly troubled my fair visitor.

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GENTLE JABS.

Flirtation is attention without intention.

Bread is not the musical composer's only staff of life.

All things that no one else wants come to those who wait.

It may be disgraceful to die rich, but that isn't worrying us any.

Even a straight-laced man has been known to go crooked.

A woman's inconsistency is the greatest of her many charms.

A man is usually charitably inclined until he gets a lot of money.

Many a man who thinks he is conservative is in reality dead slow.

We are waiting for Halley's to show us the spring styles in comets.

That the trust cut ice at low cost this winter will cut no ice next summer.

Baseball is crowding up to the front and making motions to catch the public eye.

The man who is willing to bet his bottom dollar seldom has to dig down very far.

Gov. Harmon is wondering if the country will want to take another Ohio man next time.

If a girl tells a young man that she is fond of lobsters, it may be his cue to propose.

And occasionally a man who recognizes his duty at a distance dodges up an alley to avoid meeting it.

Let us hope the weather man will not carry the joke so far as to give us an old-fashioned March.

One hundred thousand persons in New York have windowless living rooms. More work for the undertaker.

Somehow the average girl exercises better judgment in choosing her friends than she does in choosing a husband.

An Ohio man claims to have saved several thousand dollars last year by not having any for his friends to borrow.

What has become of all the people who tried to butt into the millionaire class a few years ago by raising Belgian hares?

There are almost as many ways for a woman to use up stale bread as there are ways for a love affair to get sidetracked.

That bushel of prize wheat which was sold in Washington for $64 need not feel proud. Common wheat will catch up with it soon.

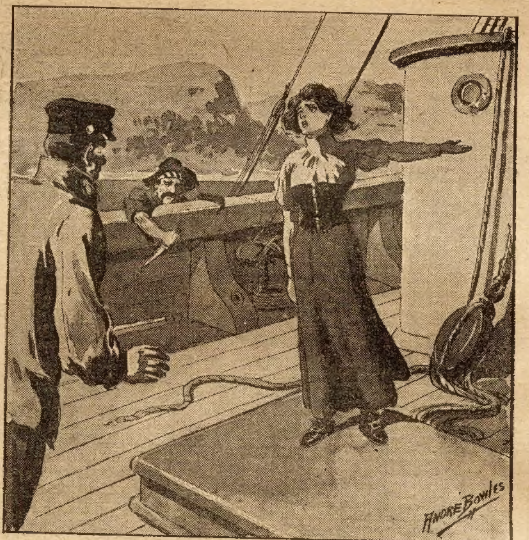
J. Pierpont Morgan has sailed for the Mediterranean, but has left some capable men in New York to do his merging for him.

When a man is at home and the telephone bell rings his wife makes a dash for it to see if it is some woman who wants to talk to him.

Philadelphia has followed San Francisco's example in going back to the flesh pots of corruption. Let them beware of civic ptomaine poisoning.

Maybe women are happier in their second marriages because the husbands all the time are trying to live up to the glowing descriptions of their predecessors.

Mr. Roosevelt does not know what is going on in this country and in that respect some persons who have stayed at home have no great advantage over him.



"Save yourself!"

and her smile faded, whereupon it came to me that I was not acting the hospitable host to perfection. I tried to rally.

"I beg your pardon," I said as politely as possible. "Don't think me ungracious, but I was astonished to see anybody here. I thought we were in an unhabited region."

"Why," she returned, glancing landward, "yonder is South Amsterdam."

"And you live there?"

"Yes," she asserted, and her smile broke forth again. "Otherwise, I should not be here."

"I suppose you came in a boat?"

"In a pikarro."

Again I was perplexed. I had never heard of a pikarro, and did not know whether it navigated water or sky, but I stepped back a ways and saw a little craft astern, a novel boat which rocked at the painter she had carried to the deck. Matters began to take on color, but I did not yet understand. I had never heard of any land in the Atlantic drift called South Amsterdam, nor of any place thereabouts that was inhabited.

"I do not see your friends anywhere," I pursued.

"That is because none of them are awake as early as myself. I am very fond of the water, and always go out early when the weather permits. I am Jan Vanderdecken's daughter."

My brain reeled, but I tried not to have another dull spell, so I forced a reply promptly.

"I hope to have the pleasure of meeting Mynheer Vanderdecken."

"If it is pleasure to you, think what it must be to him!" she exclaimed, suddenly growing earnest and agitated. "It has been a long, long wait!"

"Ever since——"

"One hundred and seventeen years ago!"

I had no disposition to be tragic, but I admit that I raised my hand and rubbed my puzzled, bewildered head. Vanderdecken must have been of mature years when he sailed on his momentous voyage, so, if he had been so long in difficulty, he must now be somewhere from a hundred and forty to a hundred and sixty years old. This was staggering.

At this point the girl moved nearer to me, and the early dawn fully fell in our respective faces. She looked, started, and then cried out in excitement:

"Why!" she said, "you have black hair and blue eyes!"

Here was another surprise. From her lips I heard the same words with which Jerry Whitebone had so often puzzled me, and they no longer seemed inconsequential.

"You are the chosen deliverer!" she pursued. "At last, at last!"

She hovered before me, a finely-formed blonde, athletic, yet refined and womanly, her hands clasped and her face moving with what seemed profound emotion. The humble second mate of the ship Cousin Polly found himself in a new role, and elevated to a new pinnacle. Each turn of the tide seemed to make matters more perplexing. A few direct, practical questions at this point would have cleared matters readily, but I was not yet past my surprise, and I failed to be practical.

"Will you tell me," I asked, getting back to my ruling passion just when I should have passed it, "where this ship lies—where are we?"

"Yonder is South Amsterdam," she returned, coming out of her rapt mood with manifest difficulty.

"I know, but where is South Amsterdam? We are near—what? Is Cape Horn, or Graham's Land, or any other charted land near?"

"Cape Horn and Graham's Land are both in that direction," she said, pointing northwest, "though just where I don't know. Didn't you see them as you sailed?"

"We have seen no land. This ship has once been abandoned, for some time a derelict, and since we boarded her again we have been without means of taking an observation. I am totally ignorant of our latitude and longitude."

"I have heard my father use these terms, but do not fully understand. It was not always so with my race. When Vanderdecken commanded the ship Zuyder Zee, no ocean was strange to him."

I recalled that Jerry Whitebone had stated that Vanderdecken's vessel bore the name she had just used.

"Is the Zuyder Zee still afloat?" I asked.

"Decayed long ago. My father has some of the iron that was in her, including the anchor. These things are very dear to him."

"That is natural. A sailor loves his ship, and, at his great age, your father must feel a warm passion for his ship. Is it true, miss, that he swore he would double Cape Horn in spite of man and the Almighty—is it true that he sailed for scores of years seeking to conquer the squalls of the Cape, and hailing ships and praying for help——"

I paused as a harsh, metallic, rattling sound broke in upon us, and, turning to the opposite side of the Polly's deck, I saw a grapnel hanging over the bulwark, while the fact that its flukes were splintering the wood inboard a bit, showed that some weight was suspended from it. Then a head appeared above the rail, another followed, and men, fierce of look and heavily armed, came piling into the Polly.

Vanderdecken's daughter screamed, and then whirled about and faced me.

"Save yourself!" she cried. "They will kill you!"

I had expected anything else than this attack, but I rallied to meet it. Being near the forecastle ladder I seized a belaying-pin and thumped vigorously.

"All hands, ahoy!" I thundered. "On deck! We are boarded—ahoy, to save the ship!"

The words were barely out of my mouth when Bijah's head appeared, and, after a quick look, he sent back a roar which must have awakened all living men below. I knew the carpenter had seen wild life, and been in many fights, but, now, I had evidence of his ability at first hand. His broadaxe lay near, and he caught it up.

"Backs to the mast, sir!" he shouted. "Let them try it!"

We swung around to the jury-mast as he had suggested. In one hand I held the belaying-pin, and in the other a three-foot section of a broken, discarded spar which, as luck had it, was finely fitted in size for a club.

If the boarders had been as active as they should, all these preparations would not have been ours, but, though the leader was eager, his fellows hung back and failed to follow promptly. They stared about them as if overcome with curiosity. Still, the leader was spurring them on with encouraging words, all in English, and the rush came without further delay, eight lusty chaps flinging themselves forward. We met them stubbornly, and Bijah roared again, this time much like an angry lion, and the first blows were struck. The gleaming broadaxe easily brought down a man, while I first flung my belaying-pin at a head and then jabbed off another foe with the spar.

"Look out for the knave in the red shirt!" cried Bijah warningly.

It was well said. The indicated person was the leader, and he was worth all the others combined. He had been making for the carpenter, but his eyes had turned upon me, and now he whipped out a revolver and pulled the trigger. The bullet found lodgment in the mast just over my head, but only for a new helper it would have been worse. Solon had arrived in the nick of time, and, having secured a belaying-pin, had flung it so neatly that the marauder chief's arm had a severe whack and the shot was spoiled.

The other hand of the red-shirted man clutched at the injured member, and he swore in good round English, his face full of wrath.

"At them, at them!" he cried. "Sweep

(Continued on page ten.)

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The Golden Spider;

Or, The Woman in Black

By Major Albion F. Grant

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CHAPTER XVII.

A LIFE'S SECRET ALMOST OUT.

IF I only knew that my child was alive, I'd defy the world and die!"

These words drawn from the man of Hampton Court in the shape of a groan caused Cecil Taine to gaze at him with feelings no one can describe.

The silence that followed them was broken by the musical ticking of the marble-framed clock on the wall. Cecil thought of the man upstairs; he remembered how old Gammer had denied that his master was ever married and how he had resented the mere reference to such an event.

And now the Golden Spider had referred to one in whose veins his blood had once ran.

When he found his tongue the young man said:

"Gammer denied once to me that you were ever married."

"Gammer was faithful to the end. He may not have known my secret, the one I have kept from the world because of its terrible history. If I knew that she was alive I could go in peace and leave the world to the tigers that infest it."

Cecil waited, looking into the face in the opposite chair, believing that he was on the verge of the elucidation of the mystery.

"Why should I tell you?" resumed old Sam. "Why, you are but a stranger to me. I barely know you, though four years ago you did me a service. You helped to send a woman to the colony for a crime against me. You are the man who identified the forged signatures."

"Yes, I think I convinced the court that Margaret Mattox and her pal did the work."

"You did," said the old man, a little smile settling on his pallid face. "I thank you yet for that, not for the money I would have lost if the decision had been otherwise, but because I wanted to see those people do the kingdom some service. Will you open you sideboard?"

Cecil went to the wine closet set in the wall and brought back a bottle and a goblet which he placed within the old millionaire's reach.

"A glass for you," said old Sam.

"No, thanks; I can listen without."

"Who said I was going to talk?"

"Pardon me," said Cecil. "It all lies with you. The man upstairs is beyond talking."

"Yes, yes, and all because of myself. The time has not yet come for the telling of my secret. The skeleton that has lain in my closet all these years can still inhabit it."

"Very well. But your silence will not drive me from the trail."

"Eh? You are on a trail, then? On the track of the man who deprived me of old Sludge?"

"No."

"I can guide you to him now, this very minute," and Barlow laughed. "You have but to go to Camden street, to number 333, you see I am giving precise directions, climb a pair of stairs and find him. It is Tony Joncourt."

"Gunner's man?"

"The business head of the great house. I think Gammer finished him, for he brought the things back."

"The things, Mr. Barlow?"

"What he went for. They're here," and old Barlow tapped the table drawer.

Cecil did not try to enter into the mystery of the compartment, but held his tongue.

"I'll not tell—not tonight. I thank you for whatever interest you take in me. I believe it's disinterested. But if I only knew that she lived——"

He paused and poured out a glass of wine, drinking it down with eagerness while the hand that encircled the stem of the goblet trembled like an aspen leaf.

"A hunt might settle the doubt," ventured Cecil.

"But where look?" cried Sam Barlow, with a sudden light in his eyes. "That's the question—where look? In London? Or across the sea? I have made millions. I have buried in my heart the secrets for which I have paid a thousand times with my blood. When a man gets money-mad, Mr. Taine, he belongs to the devil!"

"You might include women in the same category."

"Yes, yes! Old Gammer hated the sex because he never loved. He hated womankind because he never felt his heart beat for one of them. I liked Gammer."

"A strange old man," said Cecil.

"Not stranger than his master," with another smile. "I would be alone with him, Mr. Taine."

Cecil rose and lifted his hat from the table.

"I want you to think, Mr. Barlow," said he, "that my coming here tonight was for your own good. Those who have robbed you are still at work. They recently attempted the life of a young girl."

"What?" cried old Sam, almost starting from the depths of his chair. "They've not done that, have they?"

"And but for my opportune arrival they would have succeeded."

"You saved her life, did you?"

"I was in the nick of time."

Barlow leaned forward, his eyes now lit up with curiosity.

"She's nothing to me, perhaps," he said, watching Cecil. "But who is she?"

"Miss Sybil Gray, a young lady until recently in the employ of Gunner's."

"A[illegible] What was she to——"

He [illegible]sitated on the threshold of a name. was something to Mrs. Poman of Soho Place."

"To Leone?" exclaimed old Barlow with an outburst of familiarity.

"In some manner, I say. She is in madam's road."

"And did madam attempt her life?"

"Through Margaret Mattox. It was a diabolical attempt to put the young woman out of the way."

"Terrible!" was the reply. "What agency was use?"

"A secret one—a gray cone which smoked death."

"Rambani's trick!" cried old Sam. "But you do not remember. It was before your time."

"If you mean the Hindoo who was driven out of London some years ago, I am not familiar with the story."

"I mean the Hindoo. The smoking cone was his invention. There's no telling to how many evil-minded persons he sold his deadly wares. Perhaps to the person who worked the trick on the intended victim."

"She must have had the same agent of death."

"And do you tell me that Leone wanted this young lady out of her way?"

"She undoubtedly did, and, what is more, she is at this moment ignorant of the failure of her plot."

Slowly old Barlow rose and took several strides across the carpet.

"I am almost persuaded to tell you," he said, coming back and sinking into the chair once more.

Cecil held his breath with expectancy. Was he about to hear the story of the Golden Spider's life? The book which had long been shut to the world was to be opened for him and he would read the hidden chapters of a strange life.

"No, not yet," said the old man with an effort. "The time has not come. If I knew why Leone hates this young girl I might disclose something about the woman in Soho Place and defy her. Young sir, I thank you. Keep the young woman from the clutches of this viper. Her sting is death."

Barlow's head dropped between his hands and a shudder passed over his frame. Cecil drew back and watched the storm-swept body that swayed in the chair.

"Come again," said old Barlow. "Come tomorrow night. Don't fail me. Watch the young woman. I fancy there's a bond of attachment between you two."

"I love her," said Cecil. "Everything is understood between us."

"What is she like?" asked old Barlow, raising his head and trans-fixing Cecil with his keen orbs. "I've a curiosity to know what your love is like since you mentioned her. Would you mind telling me, Mr. Taine?"

"Not at all. You shall know what Sybil is like."

Thereupon Cecil proceeded and described his friend to the old millionaire in language which was fresh from a lover's heart and mind. He painted Sybil with the brush of a partial limner and the man in the opposite chair listened in silence.

"You've chosen well, I'm sure," Barlow commented. "She must be beautiful."

"Sybil is indeed a beautiful woman," said Cecil. "I don't think I have overdrawn the portrait."

"No? And a lover's picture!" laughed the Golden Spider, his old spirits coming back and lingering for a moment. "If you would only let me see if you have overdrawn the picture."

"I can fetch Sybil thither," exclaimed Cecil.

"No, don't! That might expose her to the cabal. Some other time. Now leave me with my dead."

Five minutes later Cecil stood on the stoop of the house in Hampton Court.

"I was at the door of the secret," said he. "The key was in the lock, but he would not turn it," and he went down the street with his mind filled with the adventure he had just had.

CHAPTER XVIII.

GOES TO "BOTANY BAY."

There was a little flurry in the Bank of England. Within the precincts of "the Old Lady of Threadneedle street" the clerks were whispering among themselves.

Mrs. Poman of Soho Place had just left the institution after a private conference with the main directors. As she drove away behind her mottled steeds some one had whispered that Leone had deposited a million and a half in the vaults of the bank and this had passed from clerk to clerk exciting some wonder and not a few comments.

The famous woman had gone back to her establishment and was home again.

All London had heard the story of the American husband, how he had died at the right time to leave his widow many millions in mining stocks and cold, hard cash. They doubted not that Mrs. Poman had sold some of her valuable possessions and placed the proceeds in the Bank of England, one of the safest places in the world, a bank which was never robbed and but once defrauded.

"Mariamme?"

The maid who had tripped into the splendid parlor of the house in Soho Place bowed and waited for her mistress' commands.

"Has Margaret returned?" asked Mrs. Poman."

"She is not in."

"You are quite sure of this?"

"I have not heard her moving in her room, madam."

"Go up and see," commanded Mrs. Poman.

The maid flitted out with another courtesy and vanished on the stair.

The moment the door closed behind her the woman in the chair seemed imbued with new life. She rose and crossed the room, taking from an escritoire a silver-mounted revolver which she concealed about her person.

Then she settled back in her chair to await the return of the big maid.

Duffy's Pure Malt Whiskey

THE WORLD'S BEST MEDICINE

6 Large Bottles, $5.50

12 Large Bottles, $10.00

4 Large Bottles, $3.80. 1 Large Bottle, $1.00

Shipped to any address, express prepaid, on receipt of order and price.

Duffy's Pure Malt Whiskey must not be regarded as ordinary commercial whiskies. It is an absolutely pure distillation of malted grain. Its palatability and its freedom from injurious substances render it so that it can be retained by the most sensitive stomach. It has been the standard of purity for fifty years.

It is invaluable for overworked men, delicate women and sickly children. It strengthens and sustains the system; is a promoter of health and longevity; makes the old feel young and keeps the young strong. It is recognized as a family medicine everywhere. You should have it in your home. It will do you good.

It is a wonderful remedy in the treatment and cure of consumption, pneumonia, grippe, bronchitis, coughs, colds, asthma, malaria, low fevers, stomach troubles, and all wasting, weakening, diseased conditions, if taken as directed.

Remit by express order, postoffice order or certified check to The Duffy Malt Whiskey Company, 150 White Street, Rochester, N. Y. References: National Bank of Commerce, Lincoln National Bank, Rochester, N. Y., Dun's or Bradstreet's Agency.

Solid Gold Filled 5.95

20 Year Guarantee

It seems impossible but we mean just what we say. A genuine solid gold filled watch for $5.95. Both case and works fully guaranteed. Double hunting case, fancy engraved. Genuine full seven ruby jeweled Movement of Standard American make, quick train lever escapement, stem wind and set and fully guaranteed for 20 years. SEEING IS BELIEVING. Let us send this watch to you by express for examination, so that you can see it with your own eyes before you buy it. We take all the risk, you are to be the judge. Cut this out and send it to us with your name and address (and your nearest express office) and watch will be sent at once by express. If satisfactory after examination pay express agent our bargain price $5.95 & express charges and it is yours. We furnish this watch in Gents 16 size or Ladies 6 size. State kind wanted, Gents size or Ladies size. Order today. Address R. E. CHALMERS & CO., 356 Dearborn St., CHICAGO.

FULL SIZE 31 PIECE DINNER SET FREE

FOR SELLING POST CARDS

This is a Full Size Dinner Set consisting of 31 pieces. Every piece is handsomely decorated with a bunch of violets in natural colors and bordered with pretty design in gold. The decorations are durable and will last forever. The entire set consists of perfect pieces and are selected from our first grade. We give this beautiful Dinner Set for selling only 25 packages of high grade art post cards at 10c per package. Send for the cards today. When sold send us the $3.50 and the dishes will be sent you promptly. There are positively no more sales to be made for this complete set. We Guarantee satisfaction or refund your money. ALTON WATCH CO., DEPT. 601, CHICAGO

SAMPLE CASE FREE TO AGENTS

Coffee, Tea, Baking Powder, Extracts, Soap, Spices, Cocoanut, Soda, Etc.

We want more good male or female agents at once to sell our goods—big commission. Free premium to each customer. No one can undersell you—give finer goods. Easiest thing on earth to sell and big money in it.

$100 to $200 Per Month Easy

We trust you with the goods and premiums and pay the freight charges—you pay us when you sell the goods and collect for them. Exclusive territory given—what more could any agent want. Experience unnecessary—no money needed. Largest house of its kind in the world. Territories filling fast. Write today for free full particulars, sample case, territory, etc. Address GREAT EASTERN COFFEE AND TEA CO., Dept. 32, St. Louis, Mo.

16 MAGNIFICENT EASTER CARDS FREE

THESE CARDS ARE EASILY WORTH 5 CENTS EACH

These magnificent cards are all embossed in solid gold and silver wave background. They are lithographed from original designs in ten and 12 colors and are positively the most beautiful cards you ever saw. They come in various appropriate designs, such as Eggs, Rabbits, Crosses, Easter Lilies, Angels, Chickens, etc. You cannot realize the beauty of these cards until you see them. Every single card in the set is a gem. Your storekeeper would charge you 5c each or 80 cents in all for a set of cards as good as these. We have distributed more high-grade post cards among our friends than any other house in the country. We want to give you a set of these cards just for a few minutes of your time.

HOW TO GET THEM FREE

Fill out the coupon and send it to us with five 2c stamps to cover cost of postage, packing, advertising, etc., and we will mail you a set of these 16 cards at once. If you are not more than delighted with the beauty of these cards just drop us a card and we will return the 10c in stamps and allow you to keep the cards for your trouble.

With these cards we will also mail full particulars how you can get 50 more Beautiful Gold Embossed Easter or other cards just for doing us a little favor that will cost you nothing. Fill out coupon today, address MYER CARD CO., Easter Card Dept. 35, CHICAGO Ill.

USE THIS COUPON.

MYER CARD CO., Easter Card Dept. 35, Chicago, Ill.

Enclosed find five 2c stamps (10c) to pay cost of postage, packing and advertising on a set of 16 of your beautiful solid gold and silver embossed Easter cards. I promise to show these cards to some of my friends. Also send me full particulars how I can get 50 more cards FREE.

Name____________________

Address____________________

A Little Cold.

He caught a little cold—
That was all.
So the neighbors sadly said,
As they gathered round his bed,
When they heard that he was dead.

He caught a little cold—
That was all. (Puck.)

Neglect of a cough or cold often leads to serious trouble. To break up a cold in twenty-four hours and cure any cough that is curable, mix two ounces of Glycerine, a half ounce of Virgin Oil of Pine Compound pure and eight ounces of pure Whisky. Take a teaspoonful every four hours. You can buy these at any good drug store and easily mix them in a large bottle.

Needed Polishing.

"Life," said the pessimist, "is a dreadful bore. I don't know what happiness is."

"Life is all right," rejoined the optimistic man, "if you only look upon the bright side of it."

"But my life has no bright side," protested the other.

"Then," said the optimist, "get busy and polish up one of the dark sides."

A CHANCE TO MAKE MONEY

$5,000 a year on one of our farms down near Mobile. Let us prove it. Treat you square, and locate you in a healthy country. Write S. L. Boggs, 508A, Keystone Bldg., Pittsburgh, Pa. You can grow and sell something every month.

Rushing Things.

She—Won't you give me a week to think over your proposal?

He—Well, if you want me, you'd better speak quick. I intended to propose to Gertrude this evening.

WOMEN SHOULD KNOW THIS.

Have you tried various remedies for diseases peculiar to our sex? Suppositories and cones are mostly cocoa butter, olive oil or other fats. They can't cure you. Medical Science has discovered that these fats and oils prevent the action of the medicine. You should know **why.** I want to explain it to you. And I want you to try a remedy which **will** cure—which contains no oils or fats—just pure medicine that acts quickly and surely. I will send a liberal trial, and the explanatory booklet absolutely free. Address Ella Howard, Box 495, South Bend, Ind.

Had Him There.

Irate Parent—Am I to understand there is some idiotic affair between you and that impecunious young fool Lord Bilaris?

Fair Daughter (very sweetly)—Only you, papa!

THREE DAYS' DRINK CURE.

Remarkable Success of New Method.

Edward Woods, who was a heavy liquor drinker for many years, was completely cured in 72 hours by a method which has since been successfully employed in thousands of cases. The treatment is now perfected so that physicians say that it can be given at home with positive success, with or without the drinker's knowledge. Leading medical authorities state that with elimination of the alcohol poison, many other ills are naturally cured, also there is wonderful improvement in mental and physical working ability. Life is prolonged five to 50 years. The cure is permanent; the person detests anything alcoholic, preferring water, tea and other non-alcoholic drinks. So enthusiastic is Mr. Woods, whose address is 534 Sixth Ave., 356A, New York City, that he has published a book giving details of his own case and describing the cure. This he will send free, postpaid, at his own cost, to anyone who writes for it.

Just So.

"Well, how do you like your job?" queried the inkwell of the new blotter.

"Oh, I think I'll like it all right," replied the blotter. "It is certainly absorbing."

AGENTS WANTED

Makes Walking Easy

The wonderful new **Crane Spiral Heel Cushion** is a regular panacea for tired, aching, sweaty feet. Puts the spring of youth in your steps, relieves all the jar of walking by absorbing all the shock. Keeps heels from running over and makes walking a real pleasure. Gentlemen and Ladies sizes. No fastening. Send 85 cents for a sample pair—prove it yourself.

DOANE-GRAY COMPANY
921 N. Market St. St. Louis, Mo.

AGENTS: Here is the biggest selling money maker of the last ten years. Write quick for terms.

WE PAY $80 A MONTH SALARY
and furnish rig and all expenses to introduce poultry and stock powders; new plan; steady work. Address BIGLER COMPANY, X416 SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS.

Make Money Selling to Women
Housewives need it: want it: will buy when told of its merits
The Fresco Flat-Iron
(Self-Heating Absolutely Safe) (Burns Alcohol or Gasoline)
Write for most liberal terms. One Agent sold over 1300 last year. Booklet free
New York Flat-Iron Co. Box 50 Belle Mead New Jersey

WANTED—RIDER AGENTS IN EACH TOWN and district to ride and exhibit a sample 1910 Model "Ranger" bicycle furnished by us. Our agents everywhere are making money fast. *Write at once for full particulars and special offer.*

NO MONEY REQUIRED until you receive and approve of your bicycle. We ship to anyone, anywhere in the U. S. *without a cent deposit* in advance, *prepay freight*, and allow **TEN DAYS' FREE TRIAL** during which time you may ride the bicycle and put it to any test you wish. If you are then not perfectly satisfied or do not wish to keep the bicycle you may ship it back to us at our expense and *you will not be out one cent.*

LOW FACTORY PRICES We furnish the highest grade bicycles it is possible to make at one small profit above actual factory cost. You save $10 to $25 middlemen's profits by buying direct of us and have the manufacturer's guarantee behind your bicycle. **DO NOT BUY** a **bicycle** or a pair of **tires** from *anyone* at *any price* until you receive our catalogues and learn our unheard of *factory prices* and *remarkable special offer.*

YOU WILL BE ASTONISHED when you receive our beautiful catalogue and study our superb models at the *wonderful low prices* we can make you. We sell the highest grade bicycles at **lower prices** than any other factory. We are satisfied with $1.00 profit above factory cost. **BICYCLE DEALERS**, you can sell our bicycles under your own name plate at double our prices. Orders filled the day received.

SECOND HAND BICYCLES—a limited number taken in trade by our Chicago retail stores will be closed out at once, at **$3 to $8 each.** Descriptive bargain list mailed free.

TIRES, COASTER BRAKE rear wheels, inner tubes, lamps, cyclometers, parts, repairs and everything in the bicycle line at **half usual prices.**

DO NOT WAIT—but write today for our *Large Catalogue* beautifully illustrated and containing a great fund of interesting matter and useful information. It only costs a postal to get everything. **Write it now.**

MEAD CYCLE CO. Dept. T-53, **CHICAGO, ILL.**

ANOTHER VERSION.

Mary had a little lamb,
A Persian lamb, by cricky;
It's fleece was warm in winter's storm—
And curly like and sticky.
But when Miss Mary needed coin
She sold it for a dollar,
And soon the lambkin turned into
An actor's topcoat collar.

Too Small for Use.

"Man," remarked the student of unnatural history, "is the only animal that uses a handkerchief."

"Then," rejoined the thoughtful thinker, "it is just as I suspected."

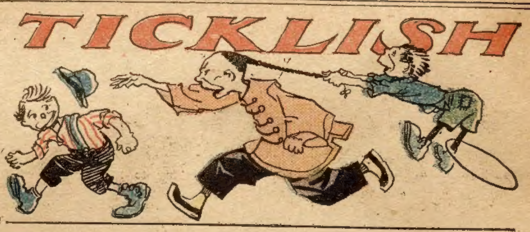
"How is that?" queried the student.

"A woman's handkerchiefs are only for show," answered the thoughtful thinker.

Would Try Simple Life.

"Say, Uncle Hiram," queried the city nephew, "if some one should give you half a million dollars what would you do?"

"Wall," replied the old man, "th' fust thing I'd do arter gittin' th' money would be tew sell th' farm an' retire tew the' city an' lead er quiet life, by grass!"



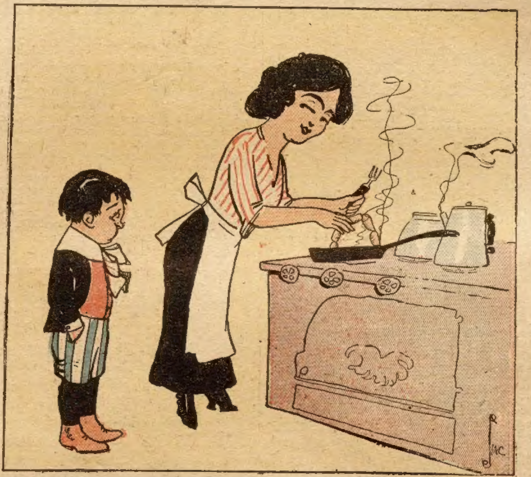
Mistake Somewhere.

"Say," remarked the fat man as he entered the meat emporium, "I always thought you were a friend of mine."

"Well," rejoined the butcher, "what reason have you for thinking otherwise now?"

"Because," explained the fat man, "you gave me a terrible roast yesterday."

A NEW WRINKLE.

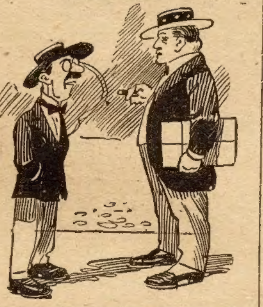


Johnny—Mother, I have an idea for a patent.

Mother—What is it, my son?

Johnny—Why not have hooks and eyes on the sausages so that we could take the skins off dead easy?

Particular.



Old Bach—Yes, I'd like to enjoy wealth.

Asker—Well, why don't you marry some one with lots of money?

Old Bach—As I stated in the first place, I want to enjoy it.

The Reason.

Mistress—I don't want you to have so much company. You have more callers in a day than I have in a week!

Domestic—Well, mum, perhaps if you'd try to be a little more agreeable you'd have as many friends as I have.

Wholesale.

Getman—I hear that Phurley has gone into the shoe business.

Shenman—Gone in? Why, he's been in for several years; he has twelve children to buy for.

More Modern.

"Those ancient strong men didn't know their value," remarked the heavyweight prize-fight promoter. "I'll bet if old Hercules were alive today he wouldn't be cleaning out stables."

"Well, I should say not," laughed the automobile agent. "I guess he'd be cleaning out garages."

Anything but Quiet.

Mrs. A.—There goes Mrs. Green. They say she is such a quiet dresser.

Mrs. Z.—Quiet? You should hear her carrying on when her husband is buttoning up her waist in the back.

And It Talks Loud.

Rout—Money talks.

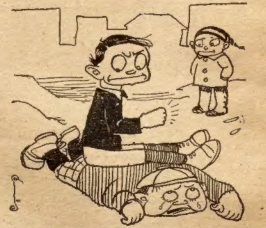
Tout—Especially when it is fortunate enough to get back from the race track.

Logical Reasoning.

Professor—How is moisture furnished to the heated air in a furnace?

Student—By means of the damper.

Scrap.



Fatty—Hey! Get off'n me! Yous needn't t'ink I'm a feather bed jest 'cause I'm down!

One on the Old Boy.

"The advance of time works wonders," remarked the fussy old bachelor at the pedal extremity of the boarding-house mahogany. "It has improved everything with the exception of woman."

"Yes, that's right," rejoined the fluffy-haired maid who writes type between meals. "And it might have improved woman had she not been perfect from the first."

BIG COMPANY DISTRIBUTES BIG MEDICAL BOOK FREE.

The well known Pierce Co. of Buffalo, is advertising its business by giving away free of charge copies of the "People's Common Sense Medical Adviser." This famous book has 1,008 pages with engravings and color plates and the copies of the new revised edition that are given away are bound in cloth. This book treats of Anatomy, Hygiene, Medicine, Mother and Babe and every family ought to grasp this opportunity to get a copy free by writing to Dr. R. V. Pierce at the address given in the advertisement on page 13 of this paper.

30,000 a Minute.

"Who is that swarthy man watching the gyroscopic car?" asked the inventor.

"That's a Nicaraguan," whispered his assistant.

"Indeed! Does he contemplate using our car down in the tropical jungles?"

"Oh, no. He is only astonished at seeing anything that has more revolutions than his home country."

LADIES, PRESERVE YOUR YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results. Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.

Of Some Benefit.

Barber—Did that bottle of hair restorer I sold you do any good?

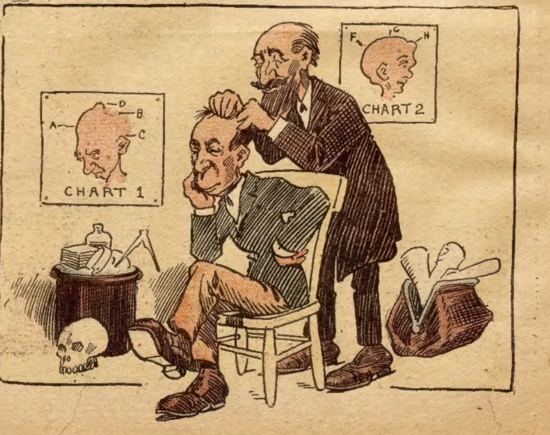
Customer—Yes, indeed; it kept me from wasting my money on any more.

Of Course.

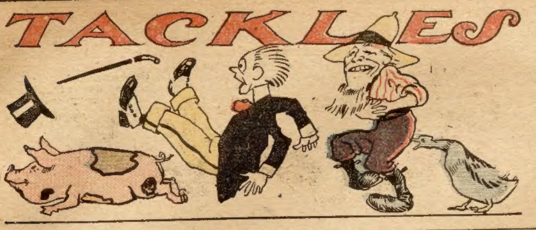
Bill—I think Miss Daisy is as pretty as she can be.

Jill—Most girls are.

WORSE.



Phrenologist—H'm! You have a large bump of destructiveness Are you a soldier?
Subject—Nope; I'm a chauffeur.



A Chance for the Lawyer.

Two college chums happened to enter simultaneously upon their respective careers of physician and lawyer, and late one afternoon the newly made medico dashed into the room of his legal friend, exclaiming:

"Congratulate me, old man. I've got a patient at last. Just on my way to see him now!"

The legal light slapped his friend enthusiastically on the back.

"Delighted, old chap," he cried. Then, after a slight pause, he added with a sly grin: "I say, let me go with you. Perhaps he hasn't made his will yet."

Much to Learn.

"Necessity knows no law," remarked the man with the quotation habit.

"Being the mother of invention," rejoined the casual observer, "she ought to at least know the patent laws."

THE POET'S QUERY.

How does the busy cobbler die,
When all his years are past?
For, you know just as well as I,
He cannot breathe his last.

A GOOD CHANGE

A Change of Food Works Wonders.

The wrong food and drink causes a lot of trouble in this world. To change the food is the first duty of every person that is ill, particularly from stomach and nervous troubles. As an illustration: A lady in Mo. has, with her husband, been brought around to health again by leaving off coffee and some articles of food that did not agree with them. They began using Postum and Grape-Nuts food. She says:

"For a number of years I suffered with stomach and bowel trouble which kept getting worse until I was very ill most of the time. About four years ago I left off coffee and began taking Postum. My stomach and bowels improved right along, but I was so reduced in flesh and so nervous that the least thing would overcome me.

"Then I changed my food and began using Grape-Nuts in addition to Postum. I lived on these two principally for about four months. Day by day I gained in flesh and strength until now the nervous trouble has entirely disappeared and I feel that I owe my life and health to Postum and Grape-Nuts.

"Husband is 73 years old and he was troubled, for a long time, with occasional cramps, and slept badly. Finally I prevailed upon him to leave off coffee and take Postum. He had stood out for a long time, but after he tried Postum for a few days he found that he could sleep and that his cramps disappeared. He was satisfied and has never gone back to coffee.

"I have a brother in California who has been using Postum for several years; his whole family use it also because they have had such good results from it."

Look in pkgs. for the little book, "The Road to Wellville." "There's a Reason."

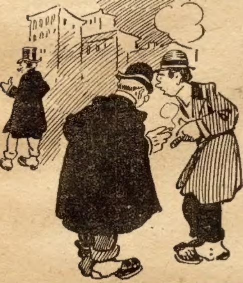
Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

Uncomplimentary.

Mr. Newlywed—Nelly, just look at that man standing behind me. I don't think I ever saw any one so plain!

Mrs. Newlywed—Hush, dear; you forget yourself!

Practical Demonstration.



Tjarks—That foreign nobleman is going around telling people he believes in the absent treatment.

Bjinks—I don't doubt it in the least.

Tjarks—You don't eh?

Bjinks—No, indeed! Every time his treat comes up he is absent.

Training the Baby.

Throughout the christening ceremony the baby smiled up beautifully into the clegyman's face.

"Well, madam," said he to the young wife, "I must congratulate you on your little one's behavior. I have christened more than two thousand babies, but I never before christened one that behaved so well as yours."

The young mother smiled demurely and said:

"His father and I have practiced on him with a pail of water for the last ten days."

FREE ASTHMA CURE.

D. J. Lane, a chemist, at 115 Lane Bldg., St. Marys Kansas, manufactures a remedy for Asthma in which he has so much confidence that he sends a $1 bottle by express to anyone who will write for it. His offer is that he is to be paid for it if it cures, and the one taking the treatment is to be the judge.

A Dealer's Excuse.

Indignant Customer—I want to return this jewel box. It's not ivory, as represented.

Dealer (musingly)—Now, I wonder if it can be possible that elephant had false teeth?

Heard in the Rush Shop.

Barber—Yes, sir; I am always glad to have you as a patient—er—I mean patron.

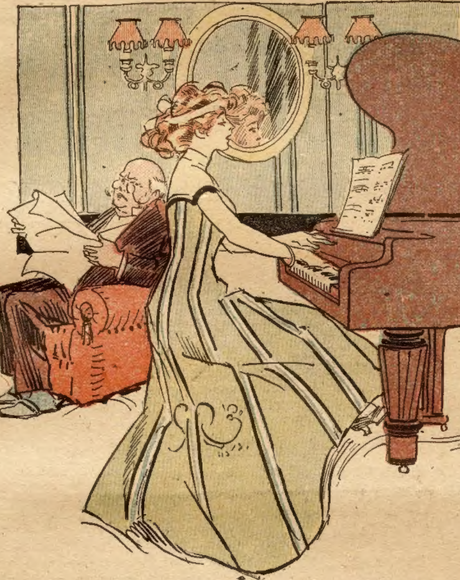
Victim (as he swallows more lather)—Patient will do. I am sick enough, goodness knows!

An Honest Confession.

"Do you think you can take a good photograph of me?" queried the woman who had not even received honorable mention at a beauty show.

"I'm sorry, madam," replied the picture producer, "but I shall have to answer you in the negative."

THAT POKER GAME.



Daughter—Oh, dear, what shall I play?
Father (absent-mindedly)—What kind of hand have you?

A Bad Break.

Casual Acquaintance—So you were always opposed to cigars? But one never knows what these husbands do once they are out of your sight. I wouldn't be surprised if your husband was smoking now.

Young Woman (in horrified tones)—Oh, don't suggest such a thing!

Casual Acquaintance—Why not?

Young Woman—Because—because—my—my husband's dead!

Proof.

He—Has she money?

She—She's been operated on three times for appendicitis.

Gone and Forgotten.

First Plague (on the way to a city)—What are you?

Second Plague (traveling in the same direction)—I am a Common Cold.

First Plague (loftily)—You might as well stay away. Nobody recognizes you any more. I am the Grip.

Lecture Postponed.

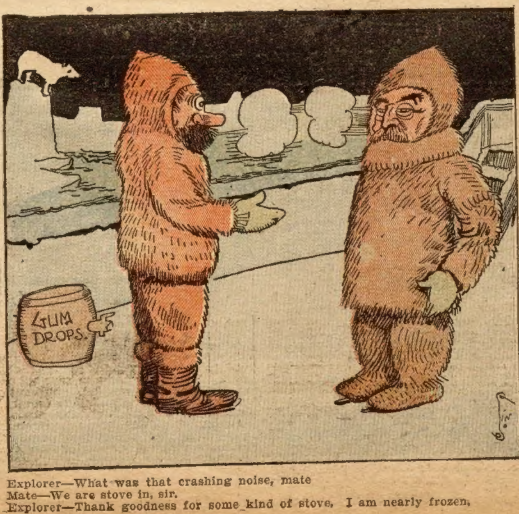
Diddereau—Did you attend the lecture of Prof. Hardhead on "Grip, a Malady of the Imagination?"

Biddereau—He did not lecture.

Diddereau—Why not?

Biddereau—Down with the grip.

IN THE FAR NORTH.



Explorer—What was that crashing noise, mate
Mate—We are stove in, sir.
Explorer—Thank goodness for some kind of stove. I am nearly frozen.

AGENTS WANTED

AGENTS HERE IT IS 200% PROFIT
Agents Coining Money
Thousands being sold. Great big money getter for agents. Handy Automatic Hame Fastener. No straps—no buckles—no chains—no freezing of fingers in cold weather. A square deal offer. Horsemen stop—look—listen—buy one—then a dozen. Agent writes, "Hurry up my order—sold out first day." Cary says, "Made $9.00 yesterday—rush order." This is only one of over 2,000 fast selling articles we furnish agents: Write today—now—for our latest proposition. Headquarters for agents. No experience needed. Just write—we show how. We want agents—crew managers—men or women—all or part time—home or traveling—to show, take orders for our goods. Write today for FREE SAMPLE.
You will make more money than ever before. Costs nothing to investigate—write at once—drop everything else—act quick—time short—let us start you—demand is big—be a Thomas Agent and get the money.
THOMAS MFG. CO., 517 Wayne St., Dayton, Ohio.

AGENTS Send your name for my money-making proposition. Butcher 2903 Wallace St., Chicago.

EARN $8 ADVERTISING OUR WASHING FLUID in your town with 100 samples. SEND 6c. STAMPS and secure territory. A. W. SCOTT. COHOES. N. Y.

AGENTS, CREDIT, Perfumes, Flavors, etc. Big profits. Express Paid. Terms Free. HERBENE AGENCY Co., Box 282, Sta'n L, New York

AGENTS Guaranteed Hosiery is lightning seller. Nothing like it for making money. Free sample. FORSHEE CO., B1069, Dayton, Ohio.

WE PAY $36 A WEEK AND EXPENSES to men with rigs to introduce poultry compound. Year's contract. IMPERIAL MFG. CO., Dept. 67, Parsons, Kansas

AGENTS $30 A WEEK EXPENSES PAID. No experience or capital required, 30 days credit; photo pillow tops 30c; enlarged portraits, bromides, paintings, frames; lowest prices; samples and catalogue free. Dept. Z. Ritter Art Studio, Chicago, Ill.

PORTRAIT AND FRAME 55c. Pillow Tops 35c. 72 page cat. free. Agents wanted. Man'f'rs Portraits and Frames. National Portrait Co., Chicago, Ill.

KEW FOUR-SIEVE STRAINER and "No-Splash." Samples free to agents; send 2c stamp, cost of mailing; $5 profits daily; let us prove it. SEED'S, 165 Duane Street, New York

MEN WANTED QUICKLY By big Chicago mail order house to distribute catalogues, advertise, $21 weekly, liberal expense allowance. MANAGER, 1216 State Street, Chicago.

PORTRAIT AGENTS: Pillow Tops, Bromides, Solar Prints, hand stippled and air brushed Bromides, very fine, Crayons, Pastels. The very latest (Emerlines) Picture Frames. Cheapest house of all. Samples free. Crescent Portrait Studio, 918 Montana St., Chicago

BIG MONEY selling our Gold Sign Letters for office windows, store fronts and glass signs. Anyone can stick them on. Send stamp for sample. Metallic Sign Letter Co., 416 N. Clark, Chicago, Ill.

Earn $200 MONTHLY selling the Dr. Haux famous Perfect Vision Spectacles—finest and cheapest on earth. Write for agents and dealers terms. DR. HAUX SPECTACLE CO., Box 115. Haux Building, St. Louis, Mo.

AGENTS WANTED
Sell our Big $1.00 Bottle Sarsaparilla for 39 cents.
200 Per Cent Profit
Best Seller. Finest Medicine. Complies with pure drug law. Everyone buys. Write now for terms.
F. R. GREENE, 22 Lake St., Chicago

PORTRAIT AGENTS WANTED
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The Golden Spider.

(Continued from page seven.)

"She is not in," reported Mariamme at the door. "She cannot have been in lately and her room looks queer like."

"Looks queer?" ejaculated Mrs. Poman, losing a bit of color. "How queer, girl?"

"The dresser has been turned wrong side out, some of her garments are lying on the floor. It may have been burglars, madam—"

There was a singular cry from Mrs. Poman and the next minute she was on the stair herself. Mariamme watched her with open-eyed wonder from the foot of the flight.

Mrs. Poman went direct to a room over the damasked parlor. There was a dreadful pallor on her face and her hand shook as she turned the doorknob.

In a moment she was gazing, or rather, staring at the spectacle that met her gaze. The girl had not described matters wrongly. The entire room was cast in confusion.

"Dare she do it?" gasped the rich woman at last. "Dare she shake the person who has made her? What means all this? Because I would not let her take the lion's share? Dare Margaret Mattox do this—to me?"

A hurried inspection of the apartment told her that Margaret had flown. Her bulging eyes seemed to get a terrible light. She leaned against the marble-topped dresser and gazed at the scene of confusion visible on every side.

At last she slowly went down the stair. Once she stopped and seemed to steady herself by the banister.

The maid came to her call.

"Is Jason in the stables?" she exclaimed at sight of the half-terrified creature watching her like a lynx.

"Yes, madam."

"Tell him I want the carriage."

"Yes'm."

Mrs. Poman waited till she heard wheels in the arch and then she left the parlor.

"To Black street!" commanded madam as she shut the gilded door of the vehicle.

The next moment the door opened. There was a look of surprise in the eyes of the man on the box.

"Does madam know——"

"Madam knows," was the quick interruption. "To Black street!"

Biting his lip, the man mounted the box and the carriage thundered away.

It was a long ride through the last hours of a real London day. Mrs. Poman leaned back in the depths of the heavy cushions of the carriage and set her lips hard.

The flying turn-out whirled at last into a street it had never traversed before.

Madam pressed her face against the glass of the door and watched the street. At length she lifted her voice and the driver heard her command.

"At the next corner stop," she said and it was done, for almost before she had ceased speaking the corner had been reached.

"Shall I wait?" ventured the man, as he opened the door for his mistress.

"Yes."

Gathering up her silken skirts with jeweled hands, Mrs. Poman darted toward the sidewalk.

"The devil's certainly in madam to come to Botany Bay," commented Jehu. "What the nation brings her here? I'm stumped."

Madam ran up a few unclean steps unconscious that twenty pairs of eyes were regarding her from as many windows, and rang a half-unfastened brass doorbell.

The portal was swung open in her face and she slipped past the portress.

"Who's wanting?" asked the brazen woman who had let her in.

Madam gave her a savage look in return and went up the stair before her.

She panted like a porpoise and grew very red in the face before she gained the top, but she did not pause.

There was a narrow, half-lighted hall running from the top of the stair and down this she made her way.

"At last!" she said through welded teeth. "Now I shall know all."

She pushed the door open without the preliminary proceeding of a knock and bolted in.

If it was still light outside the interior of the room was cast in semi-gloom, but the moment the door closed behind madam a match was struck and a gas-jet turned on.

Mrs. Poman found herself confronted by a man who had evidently been occupying a crumpled cot at one side of the room. He was staring at her with the eyes of one who did not expect such a distinguished visitor, and as madam gazed into the dark orbs before her, she said in sharp, raucous tones:

"Where's Margaret?"

"You're out o' breath, madam," observed the man, not paying the least attention to his caller's words. "Blame me if you won't have a stroke o' app'lexy if you don't sit down and get your breath."

"Never mind me," cried Mrs. Poman. "Where's Margaret, I say?"

"You don't come to Botany Bay often, I judge," was the retort. "Got a better place than this, eh?"

The man was insolent, not to say tantalizing.

"You used to come to the old nest years ago," he went on in the same irritating strain. "Got up in the world, I hear. Margaret says——"

"What does she say?" interrupted Mrs. Poman.

"She says you're rich as a Jew. You have carriages, servants and gems galore. You dress like the Queen o' Sheba what dazzled Solerman, and wear diamonds worth a king's ransom."

It was more than madam could stand. She crossed the brief space that separated her from the man and threw a purse upon the baize-cloth that covered the table.

"Now, where's Margaret?" she demanded, looking up.

"She's not here."

"I see she isn't," came through the woman's lips.

The man eyed the purse a moment and then swept it into his pocket.

"When will she come back?"

"That's what I'd like to know."

"Tonight? Soon?"

"You might wait. It would be a good thing for you, I fancy. It might ward off a stroke."

Mrs. Poman stamped her feet on the carpet in furious rage.

She eyed the best chair and then ventured to take it, at the same time saying that she never occupied such dilapidated things at home.

The man went back to the cot and, casting himself upon it, watched madam with eyes full of strange interest.

An hour passed away. No one came.

Madam looked at the man and found that he had drifted off into a doze.

"The wretch knows where she is!" she exclaimed. "He shall tell me at the point of the pistol."

Her face grew pale as her hand drew the weapon from its place of concealment. Leaning toward the sleeping man, she was slowly raising it to a level of his head when the door opened without the slightest warning. Mrs. Poman gave a terrified start.

Margaret Mattox stood before her. But she was not the Margaret of old, for this time she was not garbed in black.

(Continued next week.)

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In Strange Seas.

(Continued from page six.)

them from the deck! We have got to get the ship!"

"Backs to the mast!" repeated Bijah, inspiritingly cool and cheerful. "We can whip the whole caboodle. Whack away, my bullies!"

I felt a sudden shame that the stout carpenter should be the one to do the encouraging in this crisis, and, remembering that I was mate of the Cousin Polly, I began voicing the best words I could think of—and all the while I was pounding and thrusting with the spar. Solon added a vast strength to our defense, and things were surely going our way when there was another scream. I swung my head without daring to move from my post and saw Vanderdecken's daughter in difficulties. He of the red shirt had left his men and run to her. Now she was struggling in his arms, plainly much frightened, and, though giving her foe a fine battle, wholly unable to release herself.

"Help, help!" was her cry, and it thrilled me.

I took heed to the situation at the front. Two of the assailants were down, and a third, having retreated, was leaning weakly against the bulwark, and it came to me that Bijah and Solon could hold the position. It would never do to ignore the peril of the girl. I sprang to her rescue, calling out to her assailant:

"Avast, you lubber! Get away, and leave her alone!"

He heard me, saw me, and, with a brutal effort, he flung her from him so suddenly that she fell to the deck. I swung the spar, but he dodged with skill and I touched only air.

"You shall have your fill, Nat Stanford!" he declared.

I was astonished at hearing my name in that wild region, and now a familiarity in the fellow's face presented itself. The two things threw me off my guard, and he improved the chance. With a sharp leap he was at me, and his hands closed upon my arms in a hostile hug. Now it looked like a hand-to-hand struggle, and as I was accounted no weakling at it I was willing, but before I could return the attack his backward drive sent me against a coil of rope, whereupon I tripped and went tumbling to the deck. My head suffered in the shock, and I was a bit dazed. Then, before I could rally, he leaped up from me, caught the girl in his arms and made for the bulwark.

There was a deep splash, and he was in the water with his captive.

The continuation of this thrilling story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year; it is worth many times that amount. Send in your subscription, for many great stories that you cannot afford to miss will appear during the coming months.

Tiring Her Voice.

"Why can't that prima donna sing more than twice a week?"

"I don't know," answered the impresario, "unless it's because she tires her vocal cords out arguing with me about salary."

Why Women Blush.

The reason why nature's beauty tint mantles the cheek, under given conditions of an exciting kind, is interesting to inquire into. To begin with, the general idea is that the blood to the quickened flow of which blushing is attributable is a ruby-red fluid. Literally this is not correct. The fluid that courses through our veins is of a pale-straw color. But in it are suspended great numbers of small, solid bodies called "corpuscles," which are bright red, and which give to the blood its characteristic tint. There are from 20,000,000 to 25,000,000 of these corpuscles in every drop of your blood.

The red corpuscles are disc shaped, like dimes. They are almost inconceivably thin—so much so, indeed, that one would have to put about a thousand of them into a pile in order to see them edgewise with the naked eye. They have a curious way of stacking themselves in the veins, a peculiarity which goes to the making of pink cheeks.

And this suggests the question: Why are cheeks pink rather than noses? And why do some girls have pink cheeks and others not? If all women possessed this much-prized attribute of beauty, it is obvious there would be no market for rouge.

The fact, as ascertained by the scientific physiologist, is that the cheeks are pink, rather than other parts of the face, because the capillary blood vessels in and beneath the skin are much more numerous there than elsewhere. It seems only reasonable to suppose that this arrangement is made by nature for the purpose of ornament—that is to say, for the augmentation of beauty. But it is a fact familiar to everybody that a prime requisite for pink cheeks is a plentiful supply of blood. They are not only a decoration, but a sign of health. "Fringed with the ruddy tints of health," is proverbially descriptive.

At the same time there are plenty of young women who, though healthy and with an ample blood supply, do not possess pink cheeks. The reason is simply that the thickness of their skins masks the capillary vessels. It would seem to be desirable, then, to possess a thin skin in order that the blood may show through it. The same remark will apply to the mucous membrane of the lips, redness of which is justly considered more becoming.

The temporary and fugitive color called the "blush" exhibits itself much more markedly, for the same reason, in persons who have thin skins. In all ages it has been greatly admired in women. In the Oriental slave market, where Circassian girls, so celebrated for their beauty and sought on this account by those who make a business of supplying the Turkish and Persian seraglios, and are sold to the highest bidders, one that readily blushes will fetch a considerably larger price on that account.

Obviously, it is not possible that a young woman, in the slave market or elsewhere, should make herself blush in order to command admiration. It is a phenomenon not the least under control by the will, being purely an effect of emotion. Certain nervous centers are excited by what happens to pass through the mind, and, acting upon the circulatory system, they cause the blood to rush to the surface.

This accounts for the fact that some girls blush frequently, and others only rarely. A high degree of nervous sensitiveness may cause a young woman to be often thus affected—sometimes, indeed, to her own great embarrassment. On an occasion when she feels that she ought not to manifest the slightest consciousness of the impropriety of something said or done, her consciousness of the matter is made unmistakably manifest by a wave of color that turns her face suddenly pink.

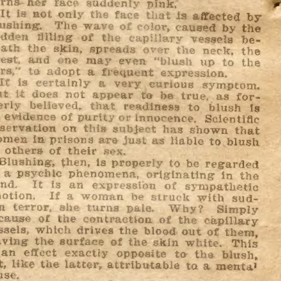
It is not only the face that is affected by blushing. The wave of color, caused by the sudden filling of the capillary vessels beneath the skin, spreads over the neck, the chest, and one may even "blush up to the ears," to adopt a frequent expression.

It is certainly a very curious symptom. But it does not appear to be true, as formerly believed, that readiness to blush is an evidence of purity or innocence. Scientific observation on this subject has shown that women in prisons are just as liable to blush as others of their sex.

Blushing, then, is properly to be regarded as a psychic phenomena, originating in the mind. It is an expression of sympathetic emotion. If a woman be struck with sudden terror, she turns pale. Why? Simply because of the contraction of the capillary vessels, which drives the blood out of them, leaving the surface of the skin white. This is an effect exactly opposite to the blush, but, like the latter, attributable to a mental cause.

That is why women blush.

Outrageous Price.



Soapless Sam—I went tru an orful ordeal last week. A leddy made me wash before givin' me a meal.

Unwashed Upham—Yes, de price uv food is goin' higher an higher every day. Dis ain't no place fer a poor man.

An Aphorism Reversed.

Heiress (signing her will)—It's just as well to take the precaution, as only "the good die young," you know.

Lawyer—Ah, I always think there's a mistake in that proverb. It should be, 'only

BOYS' AND GIRLS' CORNER

The Storm Child;

Or, HUNTING THE KIDNAPERS

By J. M. Merrill

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CHAPTER XIV.

THE FACE IN THE CARRIAGE.

GORDON at once covered the money with his hand.

A great start shook his frame. The infamous Captain Stayne was no less than a murderer in the eyes of the boy. His cool smile sent a sharp sting of anger to the heart of Gordon.

"I am very glad to meet you once more, Mr. Greaves."

The speaker got up and leaned over the seat. His smile was as meek and engaging as a parson's. It was a trying situation for the boy from the Clearwater. His teeth clinched and his lip quivered. He refused the proffered hand of the other.

Great indignation burned in the soul of Gordon Greaves. He had thought deeply on that adventure with the captain, had marked his features well and satisfied himself that Captain Stayne was one of the abductors of his sister Nada. It was to throw him off the trail that the villain had drugged and sent him adrift in an open boat. His cool assumption of friendship now was the height of impudence.

"Perhaps you have forgotten me?" suggested the captain.

No, I shall not forget you, sir," broke out Gordon, burning with indignation. "I am not likely to forget the man who tried to murder me."

"Oh, as for that there must be some mistake," said the captain with his blandest smile. "Had I attempted anything of that sort you would not be here now. Captain Stayne usually succeeds in what he undertakes."

The speaker slipped into the seat beside his boy friend. A hurt look visited his not unhandsome face.

"Boys of your age often imagine things," he added.

"There was very much of the real in my experience."

"How so? I am consumed with curiosity.

"I do not care to talk about it," snubbed Gordon, half inclined, however, to again come under the hypnotic influence of the smooth young man from Chicago.

The boy slipped his hand into his pocket, leaving the roll of bills at the bottom. When he withdrew his hand the bit of paper which had enfolded the money came out and fluttered to the knee of the captain.

Gordon snatched it quickly. The captain laughed at the lad's sudden confusion.

"I see, from your sweetheart," and the captain laughed aloud much to the wrath of his companion.

"The only sweetheart I have is Nada!" exclaimed Gordon, turning a scarlet face upon the captain.

"And who is Nada, if I may ask?"

"My sister, whom you stole from her home last summer!" returned Gordon, laying his hand in hard grasp upon the captain's shoulder.

"Eh—what?"

The flashing, angry, accusing eyes of Gordon Greaves were fixed on the face of Captain Cele Stayne, boring to the very soul of the man.

"You, with a companion, dragged her from the river and carried her away. What have you done with her, tell me that, you villain?"

"I—that is—well, you see I don't just know what you are driving at, my boy," stammered the man, whose cool outward crust had suddenly become broken into fragments.

"I'll show you as soon as we are in town."

The hand of Gordon still clutched the arm of his seatmate, and it was there when the long train bowled into the station. The captain sprang up, glancing out of the window.

"There is Doctor Hivens, now. I must see him at once."

With these words Captain Stayne tore himself free from the hand of Gordon Greaves and hastened his exit from the car. Our boy searcher followed closely, determined on turning the man over to a policeman. When he stepped down upon the walk the captain was nowhere to be seen.

Crowds of people were moving about and it was useless to think of locating his man. Gordon felt a keen disappointment, since he had fully resolved to have Captain Stayne placed under arrest. A big policeman accosted the boy, asking if he was looking for any one.

"No," said Gordon. "The scamp has given me the slip."

The big "copper" turned smilingly away to assist a woman with bundles to get free from the throng, and Gordon made his way quickly to the street.

He had learned the downtown streets fairly well during his former sojourn and had no trouble in making his way to a hotel. He was anxious to find a stopping place where he could rest, free from interruption, and plan his campaign against the enemy.

He went directly to the Commercial, registered and called for a room.

Once here he sat down and counted his money again. There it was, a cool hundred dollars in national banknotes. Gordon was puzzled as well as astonished at the liberality of the Branyards.

Next the folded paper was read:

"Mr. Greaves—You will find some money here which I wish you to use in finding your sister Nada. Do not be afraid to use it for it is all mine, and mamma and papa don't know that I have drawn it out of the bank. Of course you can pay me back when you earn the money after Nada is found

"GRETA."

So, little Greta had money of her own, and she had sacrificed it all for his benefit. Gordon leaned his head on the stand and shed tears of gratitude. Such unselfishness touched him deeply.

His first thought was to refuse the money, to send it back to the lender by return mail. He hesitated, however, when he thought of the prospect without money.

"I will keep this and repay it with interest as soon as I can," he finally decided, returning the money to his pocket.

And then the face of Captain Cele Stayne came up to haunt and annoy him. The man was a scoundrel and would doubtless again seek his life. Why he should do this was not quite plain to the boy. If his latest suspicion that the captain was one of Nada's abductors was true, his enmity was in a measure explained. That he was one of the two, Gordon was now very certain.

After his dinner Gordon went out and deposited the money at a bank, saving a few dollars for immediate use.

Had he been well provided with funds Gordon might have employed a detective at this stage of the game. He was sufficiently elated over his good fortune in receiving ready money from a friend that he thought of getting at once on the trail of Nada's abductors.

He found a letter from home awaiting him at the general postoffice, to which place he had requested his parents to write. It was his mother who wrote, telling him all the news of the neighborhood, ending with a request for him to come home.

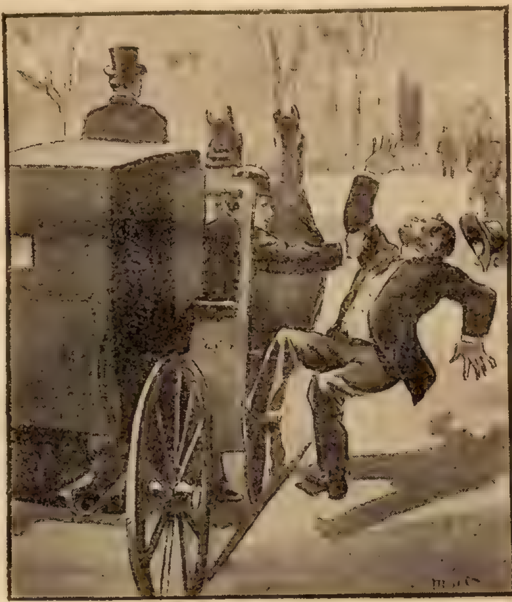
"You are needed here. Your father' health is not good and your place is here. I have seen and talked with a woman who has seen Nada and knows that she is staying away of her own free will. Her own parents have taken her and we can do nothing. I have felt very bad because the child has been so ungrateful, but shall try and make the best of it. Don't waste any further time over her, but come home to your lonesome mother and father. I am on nettles for fear something will happen to you. If we lose both daughter and son we

There was more in the same dismal strain which had the effect of hurting our boy deeply. It was not true that Nada had gone to live with her own flesh and blood. That story had been concocted for the purpose of setting to rest all attempts at a rescue, and Gordon was not to be so easily thrown off the trail.

"Even if Nada has found a good home, with real parents, I shall never be satisfied till I find her and learn from her own lips that she is happy," inwardly vowed the boy.

Gordon replied to his mother's letter at length, detailing some of his adventures, being careful, however, to not tell of anything that would cause that mother a single pang of fear. He could tell everything after his return with Nada safely stowed next his heart. What a grand, happy time that would be, and he knew in his heart that that time would surely come.

To find Captain Stayne was the first idea of our boy hero. Somehow, he connected that individual with the abduction and detention of Nada. He would dog the fellow's footsteps and find all about his haunts and mode of life.



"Kidnaper."

Midwinter came, however, before there were any results.

Gordon had met Captain Stayne once during the time, only to have the rascal give him the slip in a dark alley. Money was waning and the boy was almost ready to take his mother's advice and return home when something occurred to whet his waning courage and lend new hope to his flagging spirit.

He was passing the entrance to a theater, late one evening, when he was attracted by a party just entering a carriage.

Gordon halted at sound of a musical laugh from feminine lips. Ah! how many times had such a sound touched the very fountain of his boy's soul—Nada's Heaven-given, happy laugh! As the door of the carriage swung to after the couple, Gordon caught sight of a face peering out. The electric light revealed the clear-cut features of a young girl.

"Good heavens! it's Nada!" cried the boy, darting like a hawk upon the now moving vehicle.

CHAPTER XV.

LUKE FOWLER EXPLAINS.

Nada, found at last!

A Physician Cures His Wife of Consumption

The Same Treatment Will Be Sent to Any Consumptive or Sufferer From Lung Trouble Free to Test.

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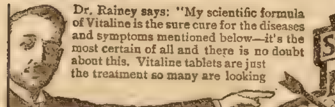

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This was inspiration sufficient to set our boy searcher on edge.

He clung to the rear of the moving carriage and was whirled swiftly through the streets of Chicago. The electric lights pierced the fog but dimly, and our young hero knew that his only hope of not losing Nada again was to be in at the finish of that ride.

He was there all right, but the finish was something he had not expected. Clinging like an eel, Gordon hung to his perch till the hack whirled up to a great depot.

Slipping to the pavement the boy stepped to the side of the vehicle as cabby was opening the door to permit of the exit of his passengers.

Eagerly the lad pierced the opening with his gaze. A glimmer of gold, a piquant face, and slender, upraised hand sent the blood tingling to the tips of his fingers.

"Nada, I have found you at last!"

The boy leaned impetuously forward, with gleaming eyes and outstretched hands. She heard his voice, turned her gaze full upon him, then gasped and sank back among the cushions.

"What's this all about?" growled a man's voice from within.

The cabby pushed Gordon aside with a gruff remark. The boy was not to be rebuffed, however. He attempted to stand his ground and came near falling. A man's hand darkened the entrance, then a face that our boy hero had seen before, when thunder rolled and lightning flashed above the Clearwater months ago.

Instinctively the lad's hand sought the throat of the bespectacled passenger.

"Kidnaper!"

Gordon uttered the one word as a blow between the eyes felled him to the pavement. When he recovered consciousness a drizzling rain was falling and a policeman was shaking him lustily.

"Come, come, boy, what are you doing here at this time of night?" demanded the copper. "I've a notion to run you in."

"I don't care if you do," retorted Gordon, his head almost splitting from the effects of the blow he had received.

"Give an account of yourself."

Then Gordon did as briefly as possible, asking if the copper had noticed a gentleman and lady alight at the depot.

"Hundreds of 'em, my boy," and the bluecoat laughed as if amused.

To have his troubles treated thus lightly, grated on the boy's sensitive nature. He soon quitted the place, being warned to get inside as quickly as possible.

Gordon hung about the place for half an hour, at the end of which time he gave over all hope of seeing Nada again. He had seen her face, however, and the sight was an inspiration. He had sighted the quarry after many months of search and it was most discouraging to lose sight of her when he had almost grasped her hand.

The hour was late and Gordon returned to his boarding place in a very sullen mood.

He was astir early the next morning, and sought the depot once more. If he only knew which train the girl and her companion had taken he would have little trouble in following them. It was like searching for a needle in a strawstack, however, to attempt tracing them. With a full heart Gordon stepped to the ticket office and made inquiries, eliciting only a growl and curt word of dismissal from the [illegible].

"He thinks I'm a fool," muttered the boy as he turned away. "I can't see why these officials treat a fellow as though he was a rat under foot. If I was a man, and rich, I'd kick and kick hard. But then, of course, if I had a million the ticket seller would bow and scrape and be as sweet and gushing as molasses."

With this wise comment our boy hero turned away to run full upon an old acquaintance in the person of Luke Fowler, who was decked out in bran new clothes and carried a suitcase.

"Well, if it ain't you, old man!" ejaculated Fowler as he shook Gordon's hand. "Where have you kept yourself all winter?"

"That's too long a story, Luke," returned the [illegible] lad.

"Stopping in town?"

"At present I am."

"You better get out and look somewhere else if you are still on the old trail. Or maybe you've seen her."

"Nada?"

"Exactly."

"Yes, I have seen her," admitted Gordon.

"Which accounts for your glum face," chuckled the other.

Luke Fowler was as disagreeable as ever. Gordon had never liked the loquacious woodsman, and every time they met he saw something new to add to that dislike. The fellow was a self-conceited driftabout, with very little moral stamina, yet who imagined himself keen and of much importance.

Despite his disagreeable self-sufficiency Fowler might be made useful and Gordon smothered his dislike for the time. His money was running low and he could ill afford any further loss of time.

"I saw her last night at the entrance of a theater," continued Gordon. "She rode to this depot in a hack. Here I lost her again——"

A deep chuckle broke into the speech of our boy hero.

"Don't need to explain any farther, Gordy," said the man, with his offensive grin. "I could have told you all about them if you'd consulted me sooner. As it is I think, when you know the facts, you'll give up this fool chase after a wilful girl, and either go back home or accept me as a friend, and travel in my company to the Soo."

"Eh? Are you going to the Soo?"

"That's my destination, my boy."

"You seem to have gone back on the lumber woods."

"Entirely, Gordy, entirely. I have something that beats lumbering ten to one and don't you forget it."

"Of course," and a faint smile stirred the lips of Gordon Greaves. Fowler was always at the top somewhere, let him tell it. The boy was turning away in disgust when Luke caught his arm and drew him aside where the two found seats.

"Why don't you trust me, Gordon?" queried the man as he thrust his bulky suitcase between his knees. "You act as if you were afraid of the best friend you ever had. Now, I don't like to be treated that way. I can give you a few pointers that will do you good if you'll only listen."

"I'll do that, Luke."

Quite discouraged Gordon

"You have spent almost a year chasing after a heartless young flirt," proceeded Fowler. "It is as I told you from the start. Nada, the girl your parents adopted, has found her dad and is perfectly satisfied to stay with him. Now what's the use of your wearing yourself to a skeleton hunting for a girl like that? She keeps out of your way purposely. She has no further use for her foster parents, or for the rough and ready boy who ran wild with her in the Michigan woods. She's an up-upper now, and fine clothes, with beads and diamonds attract one like her. You won't ever catch her back in the old slashings again, no sir-ee."

Gordon winced under this language. He bit his lip to restrain words which might not be prudent to utter. His faith in Nada was still undiminished. He would let this man rage till the end, however, it could not matter at all.

"Maybe you don't believe me, Cordy?"

"Never mind what I believe, Luke; please go on," said the boy.

"There was a reg'lar abduction, all right," continued Fowler, "but it didn't take long for the city plug who got her to make good. He's her daddy, all right, and she seems to enjoy theatricals—natural to her, as you remember. Don't ye know she was the best speaker in Dug Gulch school? She took the [illegible] by storm at the exhibition the last day of school. You remember——"

"Yes, yes, go ahead."

Gordon's heart took an extra jump as he settled himself deeper in his seat.

"Well, he was there and saw the whole performance. He knew in a second that Nada was cut out for an actress of the first water. You see, he was searching for good stuff for his company. He's been on the road for a good many years. His wife was an actress, so the girl came honest by her talent. She's made a hit, too, since she got into the biz."

Gordon lifted his head. His face was white and troubled.

"Do you mean to tell me that Nada, my Nada, has gone on the public stage?" he asked in a husky whisper.

"Yes, that's what I mean; she's traveling with her daddy's company."

"And she has been right here in Chicago?"

"Certain. She was going from the show when you saw her; and the man with her is her own and only dad."

"If this is true, why didn't he come forward like a man and claim her, and not act like a low-down thief?"

Gordon's choler was rising.

A sneering laugh fell from the lips of Luke Fowler. He regarded his companion with a pitying gaze.

CHAPTER XVI

MIXED EVENTS.

"You ain't up to snuff, young feller," jeered Luke Fowler. "D'ye s'pose he was going to make a claim that your folks would fight, tooth and toe-nail? He knew he'd have trouble to get the girl that way, so he jest laid for her, and carried her off as you remember. Then her romantic story makes good reading for the theatrical public. I tell ye 'Miss Isabel Fountaine' has proven a drawing card right along."

"Isabel Fountaine!" exclaimed the boy. "Why, you don't mean to say——"

"I mean to say jest that, 'at Isabel Fountaine and Nada are the same. She's at the head of the heap 'mong traveling shows let me tell you."

"And to think I have seen that name so many times on the show bills," groaned Gordon. "There must be some mistake."

"Not a mistake, boy. Don't I know?"

"Well, well," and Gordon Greaves breathed hoarsely in his surprise.

It did not seem possible that little, yellow-haired Nada was the brilliant Isabel Fountaine, queen of song. Gordon pondered deeply before he spoke again. Fowler might be lying, and yet there was an air of truthfulness in his manner. Had he been mistaken in Nada all the time? Was it true that she had found her father and was content with the new life she was leading as a theatrical star? He couldn't believe it. And yet why did the girl remain with these people unless she was pleased at the change that had taken place in her fortunes?

"What d'ye say to going to the Soo now, my boy?" suddenly put in the flashily-attired Mr. Fowler.

"Why should I go there?"

"To see Isabel Fountaine, of course."

"And why should I see her?"

The speaker hung his head in deep dejection. His enthusiasm was fast oozing away. Nada seemed lost to him forever. A lump filled his throat when he thought of his mother's letter urging him to return home. Perhaps it would be better if he did so now.

There was something humiliating to think of Nada, fresh, young wood sprite that she had been, at the head of an opera troupe.

"It looks like you wanted to see her mighty bad, hangin' about all the fall and winter, looking at every girl's face in a big city like Chicago, hoping to find her."

"But why the Soo?" and Gordon Greaves lifted his head with a hopeless look in his black eyes.

"The DeKayne Opera Company opens there tomorrow night for a week's run, that's why, Gordy."

"And Nada——"

"Nada, once, Isabel Fountaine now, holds the boards for that week," was the quick rejoinder to the half-uttered query of his boy companion.

"Yes, I will go," decided Gordon.

He was soon on the cars speeding northward in company with Luke Fowler.

Although he had a premonition that the old Nada was lost to him forever he felt a terrible desire to meet and talk with her, face to face once more. She had seen him when he peered one moment into the hack, and the sight of his face had affected her deeply. Whether that emotion was one of joy or the opposite, he did not know.

The train pulled into Milwaukee and Gordon went out to look for a familiar face. He caught sight of a young fellow pressing toward one of the north bound coaches. The two almost collided.

"Hello, Gus!" called Gordon.

"What, you!" exclaimed the young man, grasping the hand of his boy friend. "Are you still at Milwaukee?"

"No, simply passing through. Which way for you, Mr. Ellis?"

"Oh, back to the Soo again. I ran down for a short call on the Branyards, you know."

e is always kind. That girl is as good heat, Gordon."

tter, sir. She's pure gold."

Gordon thought of the money she had

Gordon accompanied his friend aboard the train, forgetting Luke Fowler for more congenial company.

"The folks at the farm are all well, and Gret inquired after you," said Gus Ellis when they were seated.

"It was very kind of her," and Gordon blushed up to his ears.

loaned him and felt his conscience scorch at the prospect of its not speedy return. If she could speak well of him under such circumstances she was indeed an angel.

A few seats in advance of our two friends sat a pale, high-bred woman, who had entered the train at Milwaukee. Her sad, gentle face attracted the notice of Gordon. He felt that she had not met with entire happiness, although her garb indicated a plentiful supply of this world's goods.

"A rather handsome woman," said Gordon's companion, noticing the direction of the boy's gaze.

"She is more than that," instantly returned Gordon. "She has had trouble, all right."

"Yes, lots of it," assented Ellis. "She imagines her lot a hard one, and yet she has a mint of money at her command."

"Do you know her?"

"I have a speaking acquaintance. She was very gracious to us college lads in that day of books and hazing greenies. Oh, yes, Mrs. Jerome Harkland has seen trouble enough. Her husband was accidentally killed, you know."

"No," said Gordon, "I did not know. Tell me about it, please."

"There isn't much to tell. He met his death in a railway disaster."

"How long since?"

"Some years, I think. She doesn't seem to recover from her loss though. She goes about the country trying to find comfort in constant travel. Judging from her sad face she hasn't made a success of it. I feel sorry for the poor rich, don't you, Gordon?"

"I never thought about them in that way," returned the boy. "It has always seemed to me that rich folks were the happiest in the world."

"I don't think so."

"They ought to be happy, anyhow."

"Mrs. Harkland is the widow of the late Jerome Harkland, who was a high official in one of our Western States—Secretary of State, if I remember right."

"Oh, yes, now I remember the name!" exclaimed Gordon. "I heard Harkland make a speech once, at a big mass meeting during a political campaign. He was a grand-looking man and a splendid speaker. So, this is his widow?"

Gordon was now more than ever interested in the sad-faced woman in front. He remembered, too, that the wealthy and popular Harklands had met with some kind of trouble, which had been in the papers at the time. What it was, he did not now call to mind.

Near the noon hour there came a grinding crash and Gordon felt himself hurled into the aisle with stunning force.

Great confusion followed. The train had jumped the track and several people were badly hurt. None were killed, however. The moment he was able to regain his feet, Gordon crawled forward to where, wedged between dislocated seats, was a bleeding and insensible woman. In vain the boy tried to tear the wedging seats apart.

At this moment Gus Ellis came to his aid and between the two they managed to rescue the lady. She was insensible and the two youths feared the worst. A doctor happened to be among the passengers, who was soon administering to the injured.

The accident occurred in the edge of a considerable town. Mrs. Harkland recovered consciousness, but was too weak to stand. A vehicle had been summoned and Gordon stood beside it with his friend Gus, superintending the careful placing of the injured woman.

"If you only would, Gordon," the latter was saying.

"Sure I will," spoke up our boy hero. "I don't believe she has a friend hereabouts; I will stay by her till she is able to travel. Now, while I do this, you just keep track of the DeKayne Opera Company for me, Gus."

"That I will, my boy."

Mrs. Harkland was driven to a hotel in town, Gordon keeping her company. He saw her carefully installed in one of the best rooms and went about summoning a doctor to look after her injuries.

And thus it was that Gordon Greaves was once more thrown off the trail which he had been following for so many months.

He had his regrets, yet he would not desert a woman in trouble.

Two days later Gordon received a note from his friend Gus Ellis, who had proceeded on his journey to the Soo.

"The DeKaynes are here, playing a week's engagement," wrote the friend. "The leading actress is a real star, pretty and young. She may be the one in whom you are interested. Come as soon as you can."

"I must go at once!" exclaimed Gordon, crushing the letter in his hand.

Even as he was turning away, a boy met him with a summons from Mrs. Harkland, who had sent for him, with a request that he come immediately to her presence.

CHAPTER XVII.

ON THE EVE OF VICTORY.

Mrs. Harkland received Gordon with a gracious yet sad smile.

"I hope you are much better," said he as she clasped his rough hand in her soft, aristocratic palm.

"Oh, yes, I shall get along very nicely," she replied. "Sit here while I talk with you, my boy."

Gordon obeyed, bringing his chair so that he faced her, and very near at hand. He felt a bit nervous, never having had audience with one like Mrs. Harkland.

"I have been told all about your goodness to me, Gordon, and I should like to reward you in some manner."

"I have been rewarded in good measure already, Mrs. Harkland," said Gordon, his face suffused with blushes. "Fact is, I haven't done anything worth mentioning, anyhow."

"The brave are ever modest," she said, smiling.

Her gentle speech embarrassed him the more. The idea that he was in any sense heroic, seemed ridiculous.

"Please don't," he gasped, wiping his face with his handkerchief. "I hate to feel like I was being praised for something so—so—well, so very commonplace. Why, Gus Ellis did a heap more than I. If he hadn't been near to aid me, I couldn't have done a thing."

"Ah, yes. Mr. Ellis is a very nice gentleman," she assented. "I have you both to thank. And now——"

She hesitated, as if not quite sure of her words.

"Please say no more about it, Mrs. Harkland," protested the uneasy boy. His seat was nettles, and he was eager to terminate the interview. "Now that you are quite out of danger I shall have to go."

"Not yet," she protested, as he half rose to his feet. "I wish to talk to you about yourself—about Nada."

"Eh? About Nada?"

Gordon was alert and eager at once. He was puzzled to know why this high-born lady should know or even care about his troubles and Nada's.

"Yes. You see, Mr. Ellis told me some things. You have shown commendable courage in seeking so earnestly to find your lost sister. The facts have interested me deeply. I shall take pleasure in learning the outcome of your long search. Why, it is a drama in real life. Ah, there are so many such in human lives." The speaker sighed and looked outside. Gordon read in the soft lines of that high-bred face a deal of suffering, and he sympathized with her troubles. Before he could speak, she went on: "I have had some experience with the adverse side of life, Gordon. My path has not been strewn with roses."

"No, Gus said that about you, Mrs. Harkland," blurted Gordon.

"He did?" Her brows lifted a trifle, and she grew grave again.

"Well, he said you were in trouble—your husband—that is, excuse me."

Blunderingly the boy got to his feet and essayed to quit the place.

"Please sit down, Gordon," said she, in a gentle, yet commandatory way. The lad obeyed, scarcely knowing why. The gentle nature of Mrs. Harkland appealed to the boy, as did her sad story. When once he was seated she began to talk of herself.

"I have long wanted to talk to some one," she explained. "It is a relief to unburden one's self to a sympathetic listener." She went on talking rapidly, telling of her past, of her girlhood in a central New York home, of the many pleasures that had been hers, and of the time of her marriage to the brilliant young lawyer, Jerome Harkland.

"I was as happy as a person can be until that awful fire in the pine woods of Michigan. Whole counties were ravaged, and many people perished. You were young then, yet you may have remembered."

"Yes, I remember something of the forest fires when I was almost a baby," said Gordon. "But I don't see how you came to be there in the woods. I thought you said——"

"That we were wealthy and lived in a grand house," she at once said. "That is quite true, but Jerome owned a large tract of pine in Michigan, and we lived there all one summer. I love the woods and was never so happy as then, until the fire came and burned us out. We had to flee for our lives."

"But you escaped with your lives, which was more than did some poor folks I've heard father tell about."

"I lost a very dear friend in the fire, however," sighed Mrs. Harkland.

"You did? That was terrible."

"Yes, my cousin, Annette, the dearest woman friend I ever had."

"Was she burnt up in the fire?"

"She perished in the burning house that we had occupied. It was so very frightful. I can hear her cries yet, poor dear."

Mrs. Harkland pressed her handkerchief to her face and fell to sobbing as if her heart would break. Gordon was touched and ill at ease.

"Don't, Mrs. Harkland," he pleaded. "I've heard folks that burn don't suffer half so much as we think—they breathe hot air and die quickly, you know."

The boy's weak attempt at comforting his new friend failed of its object. Instead she fell to weeping all the harder. The boy got up and went to her side. He touched her dark hair, noting a gray strand here and there among the chestnut mass. He smoothed her hair and begged her not to cry.

"It was so long ago, you know, and your cousin has been a happy angel all this time," ventured the troubled boy.

"Yes, fully a dozen years, yet I shall never forget," murmured the lady. "There is more, but I can't tell it, oh, I can't!"

"Don't try. I know how you feel, dear Mrs. Harkland," and Gordon wiped his face and almost sniffled himself.

The boy could not stand this. He pressed the lady's hand and turned to depart. She halted him at the door with a question.

"To the Soo," he said in reply. "I hope to find Nada there."

"Come back and tell me more about her, won't you, my boy?"

"I think I've told all about it, Mrs. Harkland," said Gordon hesitatingly. "Nada was stolen from us early last summer."

"And all this time she has been in the hands of strangers?"

"Yes, ma'am. I suppose so."

"And only a child, at that. How terrible; it is even worse than death in the fire. My poor boy, how you must feel at losing a sister in this way. Kidnapers ought to be punished the same as murderers, for they are even greater villains."

"Yes, that is what I think, ma'am."

"And so young—only ten, you tell me?"

"Oh, no, Mrs. Harkland, you misunderstood. I think Nada is about sixteen. I am almost nineteen and she must be three years younger. You see, she came to us when she was almost a year old. We don't know her exact age."

"Ah, then she is not your very own sister?"

"Not exactly, yet I like her just the same."

"Of course you do, my boy. At the Soo, you say. I have a friend there. In fact, that was my destination when this accident happened. If you stop long there I may see you again. Come here one moment, my lad."

Gordon approached rather timidly.

The rich woman caught his hand and carried it to her lips, while a tear fell upon it. Her emotions were mastering her again. She choked them back, saying, as he turned a second time to go:

"I wish you every success, my dear boy. I had thought to offer you money, but I see that it would not be accepted. Good-by, and may Heaven protect you."

Gordon was glad enough to get away. Not that he was anxious to part from his new friend, but thoughts of Nada preyed on his mind and he was anxious to hasten to the Soo and confront her. He was seriously puzzled over her strange actions, and half inclined to believe that Luke Fowler had not uttered lies when he told him that Nada was leading a contented life with her new-found parent.

It was night when our boy searcher reached the historic town of Sault Sainte Marie. He had read in history of this spot, sanctified by the blood of early French martyrs, and a feeling of boyish awe filled his soul as he looked at the wide-spread glow of hundreds of electric lights.

There was a bustle and rush at the depot that indicated more than the usual hustle of our inland small towns. Paying no heed to the calls of the bussmen and hack drivers, Gordon turned down Portage avenue and hurried toward the gleaming lights of the city.

It was well into the evening when he turned from the avenue onto Ashman street. Here he asked a stranger the whereabouts of the opera house. This being pointed out to him, he hastened his steps in that direction.

A bulletin board at a street corner held an announcement in flaming type of the engagement of DeKayne's Opera Company.

Gordon lost no time in making his way to the place of entertainment. Entering the lobby he found the ticket window dark. He had no difficulty, however, in entering the theater.

A clear, musical voice was swelling to the rafters as he crossed the threshold and looked for the first time upon the distant stage.

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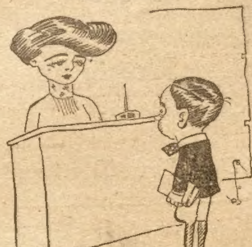

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The Stolen Maidens;

Or, The Fate of White Slaves

By Elizabeth Butler

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CHAPTER VII.

THE police patrol wagon will come back in another quarter of an hour," he said. "Now tell me this girl's name!"

The woman glared at him but answered, "Margaret Hastings."

Ralph approached the girl. "Miss Hastings," he said, gently, "I have come to take you back to your home. I had hoped to take back a number of girls to bring joy to aching hearts, but I find I cannot do this. I hope you will trust me. This woman will see that you are provided with proper clothing for the street. I will take you to my sister's house for the night, and accompany you home tomorrow. I am a detective," he added, but the girl did not seem to hear him. She was looking toward Heaven and her lips were moving in prayer. Then she swayed and would have fallen had not Ralph caught her in his arms.

"Get me a cloak, quick, a big one," he commanded, and when the girl, having recovered from her momentary faintness, had been wrapped in the folds of the long cloak which had been brought to him, he told her he would place her in a cab until he could come.

"I'll be back in a moment," he said to the furious woman, who looked like a beast about to spring on her prey. "I want to ask you a few questions about Frank. He is wanted for murder in Plainville."

He glanced at her to note the effect of his words, and saw the woman's face grow ghastly. She raised her hands high above her head and then buried them in her bleached hair.

"I swear," she almost screamed, "Frank has not done that. He is reckless and bad, I know, but he never killed any one! Oh, I swear it!"

"Ralph was surprised at the woman's vehemence. He had expected no more than a denial of any knowledge of the crime. He was too shrewd, however, to show his surprise, and was glad of the chance to escape for a moment in order to plan his next move.

"I'll talk that over with you in a moment," he said, as he passed down the steps with his young charge and placed her in the waiting cab. "You can thoroughly trust me, Miss Hastings," he said. "Be as comfortable as you can till I come. I do not know how long that will be, but I will come as soon as I can, for I know how much you need rest."

The girl gave him a thankful glance from her wet, expressive eyes, and sank wearily back in one corner of the cab as Ralph ran up the steps again. He found the woman still gesticulating and walking to and fro in a frantic manner.

He led her to the window, and turning his back to the light which streamed in from the setting sun, he so placed her that the merciless rays lit up every line of her face.

She had begun to cry, and as the tears ran down her painted face she rubbed them away with her handkerchief, and with each rub she looked older and more haggard.

"He never did it!" she kept repeating. "Never, never! Oh, believe me, for no one knows him so well as I. He always was a coward, too great a coward to commit murder."

A great light suddenly broke in upon the detective as he watched the woman's face. Only for one man could a woman have such a love, and he asked her suddenly:

"How old is your son?"

"Only 28," she cried, "and he could not have done it!"

Ralph felt a great pity for the sinful woman when he saw how she was suffering. He took her hand in his and looked at her more kindly than he had heretofore.

"Blanche," he said, "there may be some mistake. It has not been proved that he committed the crime. There is strong suspicion, however, that he did so. Now I promise you, on my word of honor, that if you will tell me all you know about the disappearance of those girls—you see I know there is more than appears on the surface—I'll try to clear your son's name, in case I can prove him merely a tool or a blind used by the real murderer."

The woman clasped his hands gratefully.

"Mr. Allen," she said, "I'll tell you all I know about the scheme I'm going to peach on the whole lot, and I'm going to go out of this business today. I'll begin at the beginning and tell you all."

CHAPTER VIII.

It was dark when Ralph reached the cab again, and the cabman drove immediately to headquarters, and he rushed up to his chief, leaving Magaret in the cab, for he felt that no time must be lost in the case. He hurriedly told the details of the story to the chief, whose face grew grave as he listened to the recital.

"So those poor girls have been sent to China?" he asked. "Well, we will have to find them, that's all. I've got daughters of my own, and I can feel the more keenly the position of those forlorn young creatures. Of course, Ralph, I'll have to keep you here to run down the murder, but there's Kelly, who isn't doing anything just now. The thing has to be done quickly, so suppose we send him after the girls?"

"Just the man," agreed Ralph. "Shall I talk to him, or can you tell him what he wants to know?"

"I'll ring for him and we can all together," said the fatherly old man, was a great favorite of his "boys," called all the men in his employ.

Dan Kelly appeared a few moments later. He was a young Irishman whose great strength was plainly shown in his six feet of perfectly proportioned manhood. There was a good natured twinkle in his blue eyes, but doggedness and determination in his square chin and firm mouth. He looked like a man to be depended on in an emergensy, and both men looked him over approvingly as he entered.

"Kelly," said the chief, as he motioned him to a seat, "have you any sisters?"

"Two," said Kelly, proudly, for these sisters, as the chief well knew, were the pride of his whole existence. "What of it, sir?"

"Well," said the chief, leaning back and regarding him thoroughly, "if your sisters had been kidnaped and taken to a house of ill fame, and after weeks of useless struggle against the power of persons who had imprisoned them, had been shipped to China, because they absolutely refused to live a life of shame, what would you do?

"Kelly's face had grown white and stern during the last words. The powerful hand which lay upon his knee closed till the nails cut into the palm.

"I'd hate to think, chief," he said, in a low strained voice.

"I thought you'd feel that way about it," said the chief. "The facts are these: Allen here, was sent down to Plainville to find out what had become of those girls who have been disappearing down there. You remember th ecase, and you know that a Mr. Brown was the person who wanted him to come down."

"Yes, sir," said Kelly, "I remember all that."

"Well, Mr. Brown was murdered the night Ralph got there, and he has the murderer to catch. He has found out that seven of then girls left New York yesterday to be taken to China. The eighth is in a cab outside, half dead. Now, I want you to go after them and bring them back. It is a dangerous job, I know, but I hope you'll feel like undertaking it, for you are the man to do it if any one can."

Kelly rose to his feet and walking across the room to the telephone took down the receiver, and asked for the number of his mother's house, and gave orders to have his suit case packed and brought down to the office immediately. Then he turned back to Ralph, notebook in hand.

"Now for the facts," he said, and Ralph accordingly laid before him the facts, so far as he knew them—the girls names, and the name of the steam yacht on which they had been smuggled. "All that I know about its destination," he said, "is that the girls are to be landed at Shanghai, taken to the interior and sold. The rest is up to you, Kelly, and I wish I were going with you. When will you start?"

"There's a train at 10:12 for New York tonight," said Kelly, as he heartily shook Ralph's hand. I might as well take that and keep on a warm trail."

"Ralph, after a hasty goodby, left the room and ran down to the waiting cab, and drove immediately to the home of his sister, Mrs. Brooke's, with his young charge. He told enough of her story to that kindly lady so she would understand the poor girl's pitiful condition.

Poor Margaret was taken in charge by that lady, given a hot bath, a quick alcohol rub, wrapped in soft blankets, mothered and comforted until she felt that she had indeed found a haven of rest.

The next morning, however, was filled with deepest anxiety, and telegrams were dispatched to the heartbroken pastor and his wife, bidding them come to their daughter's bedside.

They came rejoicing that Margaret was found, but grieving at her condition, and for many days they battled with death at her bedside, for the poor girl was prostrated with a terrible attack of brain fever, from which her recovery was slow.

When the worthy man and his wife came they had a fresh piece of news to relate to Ralph, for Mrs. Brown had disappeared as mysteriously as had so many fair daughters of Plainville, and Ralph had immediately started for the scene of disaster, where a long talk with Dr. Denton was followed by his abrupt departure for Chicago again.

Here he had another interview with Blanche, who, true to her word, had closed her house and was living quietly in a small flat.

He was completely baffled, however, in his effort to find clews, for she repeated over and over that she had no idea where Frank could be found. She had not seen him since he had delivered the Hastings girl to her, a week prior to the murder.

She had no idea where he might be found she said, but she wished he might be, as she feared some harm had come to him.

Ralph, convinced that the woman was speaking truthfully, left her and went slowly home, where poor Margaret was still hovering between life and death.

CHAPTER IX.

For two weeks he searched for some trace of Frank, convinced that when that young gentleman came to light he could reveal the whereabouts of Mrs. Brown, whom Ralph was particularly worried about.

At the end of two weeks, when he was becoming rather discouraged, he was passing along the street on his way to a car one evening, when he suddenly stopped as though shot. In the twilight, out of a large flat building which he was passing, came a fragment of a song—the song which Mrs. Brown had sung on the evening of the murder of her husband. There could be no doubt that the singer was Mrs. Brown herself, as Ralph could never forget the beautiful voice, nor confuse it with any other. It took him but a moment to step into the hall and softly try the door. It was locked, but he drew a bunch of keys from his pocket, and quickly tried four of them without any result.

The fifth one, however, turned silently in the lock, and as the song still kept up, he noiselessly opend the door and stepped into a small dark hall. Here he drew his revolver and passed silently into the room. Two people wheeled quickly as his voice broke upon them.

"Throw up your hands!" he ordered sternly. In the name of the law I arrest you, Frank Savane, and you, Mabel Hector Brown, for the murder of Horace Brown!"

The man, with a slowly whitening

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This prescription comes from a physician who has made a special study of men and I am convinced it is the surest-acting combination for the cure of deficient manhood. and vigor failure ever put together.

I think I owe it to my fellow man to send them a copy in confidence so that any man anywhere who is weak and discouraged with repeated failures may stop drugging himself with harmful patent medicines, secure what I believe is the quickest-acting restorative, upbuilding, SPOT-TOUCHING remedy ever devised, and so cure himself at home quietly and quickly. Just drop me a line like this: Dr. A. E. Robinson, 3791 Luck Building, Detroit, Mich., and I will send you a copy of this splendid recipe in a plain ordinary envelope free of charge. A great many doctors would charge $3.00 to $5.00 for merely writing out a prescription like this—but I send it entirely free.

stood where he had been found, with his hands raised high above his head, but the woman, with a quick bound, was across the room and upon Ralph before he could well realize that she meant to resist arrest. She called in a low tone for the man to assist her as she struggled in Ralph's grasp, displaying a strength which was almost unbelievable, but he did not move, and when Ralph finally slipped handcuffs upon her wrists, she turned upon him with vehement reproaches.

"Coward!" she hissed, "coward and traitor! If you had any nerve we would have had him sure! Now you'll see how it feels to have your neck stretched!"

"I'll have to tell you, Mrs. Brown, that anything you say will be used against you at the trial," said Ralph.

Her companion was handcuffed as well as herself, and making use of a telephone in the apartment, Ralph summoned the patrol, which arrived soon after, and the two were conveyed to the station.

CHAPTER X.

Dan Kelly, in the meantime, planned, and his chief's last words to him sounded in his ears as the train was pulling out of the depot:

"Don't give up, my boy," he said. "Bring them back no matter where you have to go," and Kelly nodded his head with a look of grim determination.

He reached New York only one day before the boat on which he was to sail started for Shanghai, but he made the most of the money and brains with which he was plentifully supplied, and found that the Firefly, the yacht which he was interested in, had put out to sea two days before, ostensibly bound for a pleasure trip to Manilla, but that the boat on which he was to sail would reach Shanghai at least two weeks before the yacht could possibly do so. This satisfied him, so he settled down on shipboard and spent the days and most of the nights in planning ways and means, for he well knew that a difficult undertaking lay before him. He determined, finally, to go at once to the most important mission station at Shanghai and ask for help, as he realized that his lack of knowledge of the language or customs of the people among whom he must venture was a great handicap to him, especially in the unsettled condition of the country at that time. Hatred for the white race was very pronounced, and the Boxer uprisings were beginning to stir up the country generally.

He carried out this plan and was welcomed cordially at the mission, and after he had told the object of his journey he was turned over to a young Chinese priest, called at the mission Father Paul, who was a devout Catholic, having taken orders in America, where he had spent eight years in study.

Father Paul was not all Chinese, his mother having been a white woman, but his earlier years were a mystery. He had come to the mission when a boy, and had been eager to learn, astonishing the good priests by the knowledge of Christianity which he already possessed. When questioned he would merely say his mother had been a white woman, and had taught him, but no more information could be gained as to his origin.

He listened to Kelly's story and at once promised to help him, and immediately started out to get what information he could about the yacht and her owners. In coolie garb he hung around the water for a week and then reported that the yacht Firefly was expected that evening.

Kelly was anxious to start for the landing place at once and watch every boat that came in, but the priest objected.

"No," he said, "that would hardly do. I can slip about almost unnoticed, but you would attract immediate attention, not only from the fact that you are a white man, but from your size, which is somewhat unusual here. I will keep watch and you can help later. You know they will not bring the girls off openly, but get them in after nightfall, so that they may be unseen. Furthermore, we would have no chance of rescuing them tonight, for the least disturbance would bring scores of the roughs who haunt the river side, and our show for saving ourselves would be small, to say nothing of a party of white women."

Kelly moved impatiently in his chair. The delay was very irksome to him, and he felt that he must do something soon or go insane. However, he had conceived a great respect for the Chinaman's opinions, and felt that all chances of success rested solely with him. Consequently he did not argue the matter, but helped Father Paul lay plans for his evening's work.

They finally decided that it would be best for Father Paul, in his coolie dress, to watch for the boat and when it landed to follow her occupants and discover where they placed their prisoners for the night. Having ascertained their hiding place, he would return to the mission and, reinforced by Kelly and two others who had volunteered their services, would attempt a rescue while all members of the party were soundly sleeping in the small hours of morning, as there was no doubt in their minds that the whole party would seek shelter for the night after their tiresome journey in the yacht.

Their chagrin and disappointment can therefore be imagined when Father Paul returned early in the morning, after watching the whole night, and reported failure. He brought with him a small, withered Chinaman, whom he dragged along by his dirty blouse, and who was evidently in mortal terror of his captor.

"This," said Father Paul, as he held his small prey out at arms length, occasionally giving him a shake to emphasize his words, "is the little son of a pig who let them know that we were after them, so they landed farther down the river and have already started for the interior, but I've got him, and I'll turn him over to you, Kelly. He knows their plans and you can eat him if he don't tell them. He can understand English and speak it, too. Here he is. Take him to your room and make him talk. I've got to get some rest and as soon as we can we will start after them."

What arguments or threats Kelly used in making the Chinaman divulge his secrets he never told, but after two hours he reappeared, still holding his victim securely in order to prevent the small snaky person from slipping away. He saw him securely locked up, and asking to [illegible]lled as soon as Father Paul was aw[illegible] prepared to rest as long as he could, for he foresaw a hard task before him, and knew that he would need all his energy with which to meet it.

At sunset they started for the town of Ko-Sai on the Hoang-Ho river, where the girls were to be put up at public auction. There were no white residents in this town, and the nearest mission was many miles away. Kelly and Father Paul realized that their success would depend largely on strategy, and guided their actions accordingly.

They reached Ko-Sai on the day of the auction, and mingling with the crowd saw the girls, shrinking and panic stricken, led out into the public square and herded there for inspection.

One who hung back was lashed across her shouders with a great whip, and pushed along roughly. Kelly's teeth gritted at the sight and his hand flew to his revolver pocket, but Father Paul's hand was on his arm and his warning pressure restrained him from an act which would have been madness, inasmuch as it would have meant death for himself and his companion, and would have helped no one.

At last when an immense crowd had formed around the girls the hideous Chinaman who had them in charge began a loud harangue, none of which was understood by Kelly, but which pleased the crowd immensely.

Finally the bidding commenced, and the first two girls were quickly passed over to a richly dressed Chinaman who stood near them. Just as the third was put up the crowd respectfully parted and a small party of native priests came into the inner circle. At their appearance all competition was abandoned and the remaining girls were led away by the priests, while the crowd quickly melted.

Kelly and the priest returned to the hovel, which they had obtained as shelter by means of paying an exhorbitant sum in advance, and sat down to plan their next move. The two girls who had been the first sold were inside, for the Chinaman who had bought them had done so on commission, instructed by Father Paul. He had not dared bid against the priests, so their well laid plans had toppled, and Kelly was indeed discouraged, as he knew the power of the priests in the interior of China. He sat for a long time with his face buried in his hands, while Father Paul talked to the girls inside the hut, and when he came out at last and sat down, Kelly was pacing up and down impatiently.

The continuation of this highly interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. It leads to very strange and fascinating situations. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

The Rangeland Daisy.

(Continued from page three.)

them that he intended to live on the ranch, instead of in Chicago, they were delighted.

"We'll sure be glad t' work for yuh, Roger, m'son!" said Jeff Bender, and he but voiced the sentiments of all.

Next day the happy couple took the eleven-fifteen east, and in due time reached the great smoky city by the lake. They entered a cab and were driven to the Fairbanks residence, a veritable mansion on one of the best streets.

Oliver Fairbanks, well, hearty and important-looking as ever, rose as they were ushered into the library by the amazed-faced servant, and glared at them over his glasses.

"Hello, dad," greeted Roger, airily, before his father could speak; "I see you have recovered from your illness. I'm glad of it. It's the same with me. I had an attack of heart trouble, and I'm better, too. You sent for me, dad, and I'm here. Shake," and he extended his hand.

His father laid a limp hand in Roger's grasp. "I'm glad to see you, Roger," he said. (Which was only partly true, for he didn't see Roger at all; his eyes were on the beautiful, blushing face of the girl). "But —er—h'm—the young lady, son; is she—um —er—I mean, is—is——"

"This young lady is my wife, dad," said Roger, coolly. "This is 'Daisy.' I couldn't come home without her, and so we were married at once and I brought her along. Allow me. Daisy, dad; dad, Daisy. She's going to give you a kiss, now, dad, and you're going to give us the Cross-Bar Ranch and your blessing."

Oliver Fairbanks gasped a bit, at this, but he was, as Roger would express it, a thoroughbred, and when those soft, red lips of his beautiful daughter-in-law were pressed to his, he came down, as Roger had prophesied that he would do. With the girl in his arms, he looked at the grinning Roger quizzically, grinned responsively, and said: "You know your dad is square, son; he never wants anything that doesn't belong to him, so—he will just give back that kiss that Daisy gave him." And he did, too, whereupon Roger clapped his hands and cried, "Bravo, dad! Say, you're sure all right, and the father of your son. But, say, do we get the Cross-Bar and your blessing?"

And Oliver Fairbanks' answer, most emphatically delivered, was:

"You do!"

The end.

Poor Boy!

He—You've made a perfect fool of me.

She—I suppose you mean by that the job wasn't complete when I met you?

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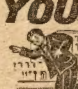

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FOR

YOUTHFUL EYES

AN EYE FOR BUSINESS.

They sat around the blazing fire,
Ted and Ned and Lou,
And popped their corn and cracked their nuts,
And wondered what they'd do
If just one wish were granted each,
With promise to come true.
Ted said he had ambitions,
He would go abroad
And see the world, and marry well;
Perhaps he'd like to be a lord,
And with the king and queen he'd sit
Right merry at the board.

Ned would like to be a singer,
With a wondrous voice;
To sing upon the stage
Would be his final choice.
And he would charm the whole wide world,
And make each heart rejoice.

Still until the last one
Thoughtfully sat Lou.
She pulled a curl, and frowned a bit,
Uncertain what to do.
"I think," she said, "if I'd one wish,
I'd wish to make it two."

The Whip Bow.

Would you like to know how to make a whip bow? This graceful and powerful weapon is like an ordinary long bow, with the exception that the bowstring is made fast to one end, after the manner of the whip-lash; where the whip-lash terminates in a "snapper," the bowstring ends in a hard, round knot. The arrow is made like any other arrow, either with a blunt end or a spear point. In one side of the arrow a notch is cut; the bowstring being slipped into this notch, the knot at the end of the string prevents the arrow from slipping off until thrown by the archer, who, taking the butt of the whip-bow in his right hand, holds the arrow at the notch with his left hand; then swaying his body from side to side, he suddenly lets go with his left hand, at the same time extending his right arm to its full length from his side; this not only gives the arrow all the velocity it would acquire from the bow, but adds the additional force of a sling, thus sending the projectile a greater distance. In some sections of the country the whip-bow is a great favorite among the boys, who throw the arrows up perpendicularly an amazing distance. Arrows can be bought in any city, but most boys prefer to make their own, leaving the "store arrows" for the girls to use with their pretty "store bows."

The essential quality in an arrow is straighlness. A queer head can be made of an old piece of hoop iron, a broken blade of a knife or any similar piece of iron or steel, by grinding it down to the proper form and then binding it on the shaft with fish line, silk, or a "waxed end," such as shoemakers use, or the arrows may have a blunt end with a sharp pointed nail in the head.

These arrows should only be used in target practice or when after game. They are dangerous on the playground.

A simple whip-saw bow is made by any boy in a few minutes out of an elactic sapling or branch, and the arrow cut out of a pine shingle with a pocket knife. This can be improved upon as much as may be desired by substituting a piece of straight grained, well-seasoned wood for the tree branch and regularly made Indian arrows for the crude pine ones.

Great fun might be derived from forming whip-bow companies, and having regular target practice, with occasional match games.

Medley Game.

Choose some one with a good business head for the auditor in this game, and give him pencil and paper on which to write in a vertical column the names of all the players.

When the paper is ready the auditor must indicate some one to open the game. The one indicated must begin to repeat some verse or sentence. Suppose she begins to repeat, "Mary had a little lamb," as soon as she comes to a word which suggests another verse or sentence to any one of the players, that one must interrupt and go on with another verse. For example, suppose the first player said, "Mary had a little—" then some one picked her up by saying, "little star, how I wonder what you are," and immediately another player says, "You are a goose," another picks him up with "Goosey, Goosey Gander, where—" another says, "where is my wandering boy—" and still another says, "boy blue, come blow—" another, "blow, bugles, blow, set the wild echoes flying," and so on till no one can think of anything to say, and the last player finishes up a verse or completes a sentence. Each one who completes a sentence or verse is credited one point by the auditor, and must start a new verse. Any one may interrupt with a new verse as soon as it occurs to him, but when two start at nearly the same time the auditor must decide who has the right of way, and the auditor must never be disputed. When no one can think of a new verse to start off with the game is ended, and the one who has the most points receives a prize, while the one who has the fewest points receives the booby prize. Every one must have his wits about him in this game, and think and speak quickly. It is still more funny if all the players are singers and can sing the medley instead of repeating it. In this case the players might choose sides, each side having a leader and one side interrupt the other. That is, suppose the leader on one side starts singing, "Mary had a little,' then some one on the other side sings, "little star," the rest on her side joining in, then the alternate side interrupts again. Try this some evening when you want to be livened up.

A Tip of a Tail.

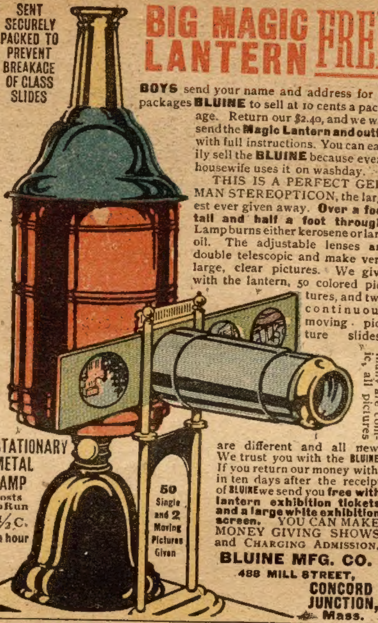
In the beginning the tail had an ending, beautiful and well rounded just like the ending of a fairy tale; but the owner of this tail was greedy as well as vain and so—well, something happened. What happened is really and honestly true.

Sir Friskers Nutpick, a gray squirrel, owned the tail. He was proud of it, and often laid its handsome tip lovingly between his ears; sometimes as he leaped across the soft grass he looked as if he might have descended from a comet.

Sir Friskers frisked through his once happy days on a large estate. Here lived a man who had built a place wherein trout families might grow and be happy, away from the tempting bait thrown to them by the small boy and the big boy. This trout home was a sort of reservoir covered with a stout iron grating, through which the fish might look at the sky—if they cared about clouds and sunsets. Their meals were brought to them every day, just as if they were little children shut upstairs with the measles. Whether the trout liked this way of boarding or not is a deep, dark secret; but Sir Friskers did like it, for often some of the breakfast crumbs stayed on the iron grating instead of falling through to the trout. Sir Friskers daily leaped upon the grating, and if he found crumbs ate them without a "please" or "thank you."

Now his handsome tail often hung through the grating. For many days the trout held serious debates as to what this great gray thing was that hung just above the water. They knew it was alive, for sometimes it was there and sometimes it wasn't; and it even waved back and forth. At last the largest and wisest trout made up his mind that it was an unusually choice fat worm and decided to take the risk of finding out. He jumped and caught the beautiful tail of Sir Friskers square between his teeth. Sir Friskers barely saved himself from going straight through the grating by clinging fast with his four paws.

Then a man, whom Sir Friskers feared above all things, came at the sound of his wailing and rescued him from the terrible grip of the five-pounder.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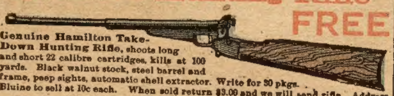


Splendid Hunting Rifle FREE

Genuine Hamilton Take-Down Hunting Rifle, shoots long and short 22 calibre cartridges, kills at 100 yards. Black walnut stock, steel barrel and frame, peep sights, automatic shell extractor. Write for 30 pkgs. Bluine to sell at 10c each. When sold return $3.00 and we will send rifle. Address

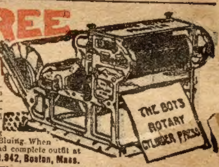
BLUINE MFG. CO., 489 MILL ST., CONCORD JUNCT., MASS.

PEARY NORTH POLE DOLL FREE

Wonderful Peary North Pole Talking Doll, dressed in furry Eskimo Suit, Eskimo Hood tied with ribbon, real laced moccasins, Eskimo mittens on hands. When you squeeze it Dolly cries for Mamma and Papa, just like a little Eskimo. Every little girl will be delighted with it. This lovely Eskimo Doll has the prettiest face imaginable, and is just like the little Eskimos Peary saw on his trip to the Pole. This fine, great Doll, a foot high, is the biggest Eskimo Doll ever given away. Head and body are unbreakable. Write for 24 packages of Quaker Sheet Bluing to sell at 10c each. When sold return our $2.40 and we send this beautiful Eskimo Doll, all charges prepaid. **FRIEND SOAP CO., Dept. 941, BOSTON, Mass.**

LOCKET, CHAIN & RING FREE

Roman gold plated locket, 1¼ inches in diameter, sparkling stone, opens, holds two pictures, Gold plated neck chain, elegant ring with 3 Ruby stones and 6 Pearls. All three given free for selling 24 pckgs. Quaker Sheet Bluing, at 10c each. Write for Bluing **FRIEND SOAP CO.**
Dept. 943, Boston, Mass.


THE BOYS ROTARY CYLINDER PRESS

PRINTING PRESS and OUTFIT FREE

ROTARY PRESS exactly like this picture. It prints cards and announcements better and faster than any other small press. You can quickly learn to use it and earn money. Outfit includes large font of type; supply of ink, package of cards, large roll of paper, tweezers, bronzing cotton and box of gold bronze. Press and complete outfit given for selling only 24 packages Quaker Sheet Bluing at 10c each. Send your name and address for Bluing. When sold send us $2.40 and we will send press and complete outfit at once. Write today. **FRIEND SOAP CO., Dept. 942, Boston, Mass.**

Stem Wind Watch & Ring FREE

FREE

Genuine American Watch, Stem Wind and Stem Set. Beautifully embossed, highly polished case, latest improved movement. Guaranteed correct time keeper; also fine Ring with Sparkling Gem, both Free for selling 24 Jewelry Novelties at 10 cents each. Write for Jewelry. When sold send us $2.40 and we send watch and ring.

Friend Soap Co.
Dept. 162,
Boston, Mass.

SELF INSTRUCTION BOOK
VIOLIN

VIOLIN FREE

FINE, handsome, clear toned, good size Violin, highly polished, beautiful wood, ebony finished pegs, finger board and tail piece, 1 silver string, 3 gut strings, long bow, white horse hair, box resin, FINE SELF INSTRUCTION BOOK. Write for 24 packages Quaker Sheet Bluing to sell at 10c ea. When sold return $2.40 and we send beautiful Violin and outfit just as represented.

Friend Soap Co.,
Dept. 607, Boston, Mass.

I WILL HELP YOU CURE YOURSELF OF KIDNEY, BLADDER OR RHEUMATIC TROUBLE, FREE

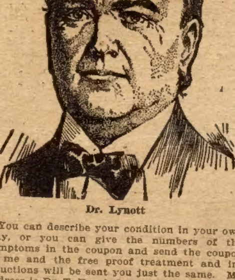
I will send you free proof treatment and give you simple instructions how to cure yourself in your home, without cost. Write me today.

So that all who suffer from kidney trouble, bladder trouble or rheumatism may know without expense that at last a genuine and reliable cure for these diseases has been found, I will send to any victim of these ailments a free trial treatment and such simple instructions that anyone can cure himself at home, free. I say free and I mean free. I will make no charge; you have only to write me a letter, giving me your symptoms and telling me how you feel and I will do as I promise.

To give free treatment is the best way to prove my claims. I bear the expense. You have simply to take my treatment as directed and you will know I can cure you. You will owe me nothing now or later when cured. It is my free gift to the thousands of uric acid sufferers, and I want all to take advantage of it. I have devoted my life to the cure of these diseases. I am in a position to help you and my help will cost you nothing.

Write me a letter today, describing your condition in your own words, and I will send you a free treatment for it. Some of the leading symptoms of a kidney, bladder or rheumatic disease are:

1. Pain in the back.
2. Too frequent desire to urinate.
3. Burning or obstruction of urine.
4. Pain or soreness in the bladder.
5. Prostatic trouble.
6. Gas or pain in the stomach.
7. General debility, weakness, dizziness.
8. Pain and soreness under right ribs.
9. Swelling in any part of the body.
10. Constipation or liver trouble.
11. Palpitation or pain under the heart.
12. Pain in the hip joint.
13. Pain in the neck or head.
14. Pain or soreness in the kidneys.
15. Pain or swelling of the joints.
16. Pain and swelling of the muscles.
17. Pain and soreness in nerves.
18. Acute or chronic rheumatism.



Dr. Lynott

You can describe your condition in your own way, or you can give the numbers of the symptoms in the coupon and send the coupon to me and the free proof treatment and instructions will be sent you just the same. My address is Dr. T. Frank Lynott, 2768 Occidental Building, Chicago, Ill.

I am asking you for no money. All I ask is the privilege of proving to the afflicted that I can and will cure kidney, bladder and rheumatic trouble in a simple, scientific, painless way, that I can stop the painful backache, the swelling flesh, the inflamed bladder, the torturing rheumatism. I am successful with old and young, those who have just become sick and those who have suffered for years.

Since I ask for no money write me today and you will be surprised to see how easy it is to cure you when the right remedies, whose purity I have vouched for to the U. S. Government, are sent you, and when a doctor gives you the right advice. I will give you the right remedies and right advice and charge you nothing, so correspond with me today.

Write a letter, or send the coupon, or do both.

DR. T. FRANK LYNOTT,
2768 Occidental Bldg., Chicago

I notice symptoms number ____________

____

(Here put down the numbers.)

I will be obliged to you for a free proof treatment and any instructions and advice you think necessary for the cure of my case. My age is ________

Kindly address me

____

____

____

Please write your address plainly; or write your address on a separate piece of paper and pin the coupon on.